Commentary

VOLUME EIGHTY-ONE • NUMBER TWO • FEBRUARY 1986

How the Constitution Disappeared

Lino A. Graglia

Liberalism and Zionism
Edward Alexander

The Lost Honor of Geraldine Ferraro
James Ring Adams

Execution Day in Riyadh
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Who's Afraid of Women's Studies?
Elizabeth Lilla

In the House of Glass—A Story
Ken Chowder

BOOKS IN REVIEW: Philip Gold / Jonathan D. Sarna / Jeffrey Herf
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Commentary

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Letters from Readers

Totalitarianism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his analysis of the present state of the unending debate on the concept of "totalitarianism" ["Is There Now, or Has There Ever Been, Such a Thing as Totalitarianism?," October 1985], Walter Laqueur shows the scholarly competence and personal fairness which his readers and friends have come to expect from him. In particular, he recognizes that the dictatorial regimes of the Soviet Union and China today differ in important respects from the definitions of totalitarianism that dominated Western discussion of the subject in Stalin's time and appeared still to fit the late period of the rule of Mao Zedong. Mr. Laqueur points out that scholars like Pierre Hassner, Michael Walzer, and myself, who defended the relevance of the totalitarianism concept against earlier wholesale attacks on it, but regard it as no longer appropriate to more recent developments, do not do so from any desire to blur the fundamental difference that still exists between those regimes and free societies. Moreover, in criticizing alternative formulas for this later phase in the evolution of Communist dictatorships, such as "totalitarianism in decline," "failed totalitarianism," or "post-totalitarian authoritarianism," he has made some points which I for one regard as worthy of serious consideration.

Nevertheless, Mr. Laqueur's conclusion that "it is undeniable that the totalitarianism concept in its original form is in need of modification" but that we should "stick to the totalitarian label . . . for want of a better term" seems to me an obvious non sequitur. It could only occur, in my opinion, to a man of Mr. Laqueur's familiarity with the subject because he has not thought through just what caused the major changes in the leading Communist dictatorships, and is therefore inclined to regard them as historical accidents of a reversible character. My own, opposite, view, which I have consistently developed since the late 60's—long before the collapse of Maoism in China—is that totalitarianism of the Communist type could not create and preserve its unique character without a profoundly utopian faith, and that this faith was bound to founder eventually as it conflicted with, and eventually succumbed to, the necessity for economic modernization in more or less underdeveloped countries.

What Mr. Laqueur seems to regard as the accidental ups and downs of personal despotism in totalitarian Communist regimes, events that might be repeated in equally accidental future crises without affecting the basic totalitarian character of these regimes, are seen by me as unrepeatable phases in the inevitable exhaustion of the utopian belief that originally inspired Communist rule and was the ultimate root of its totalitarian character. This can be shown to apply to the entire story of Stalinist despotism—from the preparation for it in the horrors of forced collectivization; through its full development in the great blood purge; to its final projects, which were increasingly difficult to fulfill; and to its end, with the death of the despot. It can be shown as well in the other story, very different in its detailed course, of Mao Zedong: of how a gradual decline in his authority caused him to attempt to establish his personal despotism at a late stage in his rule; of the tremendous damage wrought by that attempt not only to his intended victims but to the suffering country as a whole; of the indecisive efforts to restore order in Mao's last years; and of the new start that began slowly after his death and has greatly accelerated since. Neither of these dramatic stories can be understood historically except as phases in the crucial struggle between the utopian belief that originally inspired Communist rule and the requirements of modernization needed to maintain it.

As Mr. Laqueur knows and has recognized, I do *not* believe that the exhaustion of the utopian driving force of Communist ideology must end dictatorial single-party rule in countries that have never known democracy. But the loss of utopian faith has ended recurrent attempts at ever-new "revolutions from above," conceived as ever-new efforts to get closer to utopia; it has therefore ended the horror of periodic measures of mass annihilation of entire social or national categories, as distinct from the persecution of individual dissenters. It

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has, in short, ended what in my view basically distinguished these regimes of our time from the countless tyrannies and dictatorships of the past.

In that sense, the end of a utopian faith, of a recurrent urge for new revolutions from above, and of the practice of mass annihilation has also ended what could meaningfully be understood by the term totalitarianism. That is why I consider the present Communist regimes "post-totalitarian," even if they are not the least bit "liberalized." If you think the term "authoritarianism" is too mild—though I have not noticed any particular mildness in some of the "authoritarian" regimes of Latin America—you may call them post-totalitarian dictatorships; or if that seems to overstress the power of an individual leader, you may call them post-totalitarian single-party regimes. Like Mr. Laqueur, I do not think they will live forever, but I cannot undertake to forecast when and how they may undergo further transformation. I feel sure, however, that a return to their totalitarian origin is excluded: that particular secular religion is dead—at least in those countries that have tried it out.

RICHARD LOWENTHAL
Berlin, West Germany

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Most Western theories of totalitarianism seem to me to have missed the most important qualitative difference between totalitarian and authoritarian societies. Walter Laqueur's article is, unfortunately, no exception.

All the "basic" features of totalitarian dictoratorship mentioned by the Western political thinkers Mr. Laqueur cites—Hannah Arendt, Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski, Juan Linz, Dietrich Bracher, and others—are, in fact, merely descriptions of instruments and/or methods of manipulating society. . . . All the elements referred to by these writers—the existence of a monopolistic political organization, a monopoly of ideology, a near-total control of the mass media, a centrally directed economy, a centralized and hierarchically organized mass movement, a terroristic police, a weapons monopoly, etc.—all these elements, while important, fail to make an essential point. . . . What qualitatively separates totalitarianism from all other authoritarian phenomena is a *different type of unfreedom,* a different kind of enslavement of the individual and of society. In my view, the most important distinction to be made is between *active* and *passive* unfreedom. This distinction was first made by a Russian émigré philosopher, Roman Redlich, in his pioneering work, *Stalinism as a Spiritual Phenomenon,* back in the early 1950's.

In authoritarian (usually right-wing) dictatorships, an individual is deprived of his rights to free expression, free assembly, free elections, free demonstrations, independent trade unions, etc. Human freedom is sometimes limited very severely in such states. But in a totalitarian society (the essence of which was described by George Orwell in his *1984*), an individual is not only limited in his freedom (passive slavery), but is forced actively to support his slavery (active unfreedom). A citizen of a totalitarian society must be a member of the official trade union, must vote for only one party candidate in rigged elections (which is why, in totalitarian societies, 99 percent of the population votes for party candidates), must demonstrate in support of the ruling party on the anniversary of the "revolution," and must actively support (with an expression of joy and optimism on his face) all party initiatives. Otherwise, the citizen in a totalitarian nation is considered an enemy. . . .

The conclusion is clear: passive unfreedom tries to induce physical enslavement—bad enough, God knows. But active unfreedom tries to enslave people's minds—the ultimate, and perhaps peculiarly 20th-century variety of slavery. . . .

A failure to understand the qualitative difference between passive and active unfreedom has led to misunderstandings between émigrés from Communist countries and people who have never directly experienced totalitarianism. My friends in the West are often shocked by recent émigrés saying such things as, "Thank God, we now are free, we do not have to vote, we do not have to participate in demonstrations, we do not have to be members of trade unions, etc." This is also the reason that so many emigrants from totalitarian societies consider conditions in some right-wing authoritarian states as, relatively speaking, a kind of freedom. Of course, after a while they usually begin to realize the deep differences between the prevailing conditions of passive unfreedom and conditions in a truly democratic open society.

Unfortunately, a majority of statesmen, scholars, and informed laymen in democratic societies have failed to grasp the distinction between active and passive unfreedom. Even when a few have come to grips with it . . . —as have Walter Laqueur and Jeane J. Kirkpatrick—they do not understand that it is qualitative and not quantitative. For them, the most important differences are: the global goals of every totalitarian society on the one side (now even Albania has become a center of a worldwide "Marxist-Leninist" movement) and the nationally limited goals of authoritarianism on the other side; full party control of all spheres of social life on the one side and usually a free market and freedom of artistic expression on the other side; lack of opportunity to leave a country on the one side and the possibility of emigration on the other. All these are very important differences, but only quantitative.

The ultimate level of active unfreedom exists only in Orwell's *1984*, not in the real world. In the USSR after the death of Stalin, in some spheres active unfreedom was replaced by "classical" (i.e., passive) unfreedom. Jaruzelski's Poland and Tito's Yugoslavia also represent good examples of such a replacement, which conceivably might also lead an entire society to a transition from active to passive unfreedom. That transition, in turn, could be the first step toward real freedom and democracy. But for the foreseeable future, it is impossible to avoid the use of the concepts of passive and active unfreedom in discussing totalitarianism in all its stages.

MIHAJLO MIHAJLOV
Radio Free Europe
Munich, West Germany

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Walter Laqueur's analysis of "totalitarianism" preserves the concept in relation to the Soviet Union but seems to yield most of the word's value as an analytical basis for interventionist policies in the Third World. Indeed, Mr. Laqueur's next-to-last paragraph leaves the impression that there is little basis for concern about the advance of totalitarianism in the

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Third World; hence, a reader might assume, there is little need to act against a regime like that of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua.

The distinction between authoritarianism and totalitarianism rests on the difference between a despotic regime that aims merely at keeping a person or group in power (authoritarianism) and one that seeks to promote an *idea* or ideology. This difference holds whether or not the idea is actually believed by anyone; all that is necessary is that people act as if they believe in it. Totalitarianism is much more ambitious than authoritarianism, requiring far greater instruments of control. Moreover, since ideas outlive people, they can have staying power that personal despotisms cannot.

The missing piece in a really convincing theory of totalitarianism would highlight the theory's applicability to regimes of the Left as well as the Right. Few people have trouble seeing Hitler as a totalitarian, because the goals of Nazism were "intrinsically evil." But how, Mr. Laqueur notes many people arguing, can you say the same of Communism, whose purposes reach for the highest ideals of freedom and social justice?

The missing piece lies in understanding that the totalitarianisms of both Left and Right simply rest on opposite totalist *myths*—one (that of the Right) appealing to the moral and cultural core of a society (the Aryan man in German society), and the other (that of the Left) appealing to the moral and cultural margins (the "outs," the world proletariat, or the "authentic black"). In pursuing its respective myths, each side will use all the instruments of violence and terror—even genocide itself—to persecute and suppress opposition. . . .

The greatest threat of totalitarianism today is not in the USSR or the Third World, but in the West—among the most highly educated elites. Their inability to see the Left's myth for what it is reflects their *need* of a myth to replace the traditional sources of order, values, and especially religion. And religious longing draws on a special epistemology that will hear no arguments framed in Western, secular terms.

The missing piece in the analysis of totalitarianism, then, is a religious piece. Since those who long for it are estranged from traditional religious forms, the piece must be forged in other terms. Until this changes, the hope of most Western intellectuals will continue to be vested in a "Marxism" that no one can touch or criticize.

A. Lawrence Chickering
Institute for Contemporary Studies
San Francisco, California

To the Editor of Commentary:

Walter Laqueur argues that Hannah Arendt's concept of totalitarianism is flawed because it does not encompass changes that have occurred in Russia after Stalin's death. There is a good reason for this. Post-Stalinist Russia was not a totalitarian state in her view because it had abandoned the use of mass terror, the element which, for Hannah Arendt, distinguished totalitarianism from all other forms of government. This development does not refute her analysis of totalitarianism; rather, it compels the use of a different term to describe this change in the Soviet system.

For Arendt, *contra* Laqueur, mass terror makes totalitarianism unique because it enables the regime to gain complete control over its citizens. Such terror is totalitarianism's most frightening and disturbing aspect, imposing its inhuman demands on the entire populace. . . . Exacted mechanically for no humanly recognized goal, its evil transcends politics, ideological rationalizations notwithstanding. Extermination for its own sake is not simply a political crime, it is a crime against humanity.

One of the peculiarities of such terror is that it is imposed on individuals who are no threat to the regime, since the regime's real enemies have already been eliminated. The victims are a politically defined class determined arbitrarily by the regime's leader. . . .

Mass terror, which directly attacks the most basic norms of civilized life, creates a moral vacuum that moves observers mistakenly to discern in it a morally intelligible purpose. Thus, during the Soviet show trials, it was generally thought that the accused must be at least potentially guilty of some

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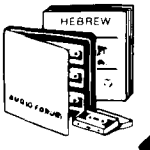

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crime—total innocence was inconceivable.

A final problem with Mr. Laqueur's analysis is its overemphasis on foreign-policy factors. This approach compromises the need to understand political phenomena objectively, unbiased by political preconceptions and the exigencies of day-to-day politics.

It also oversimplifies the task of formulating foreign policy. For the nature of another country's political system should not automatically dictate one's own foreign policy. Even if the USSR were not totalitarian, a hard-line U.S. position might be appropriate. Conversely, one could hold that the USSR is totalitarian but propose accommodation. During World War II, when most would agree the USSR was a totalitarian state, the United States became its ally (on the principle that the enemy of my enemy is my friend).

Thus, calling Russia totalitarian, as Mr. Laqueur wishes to do, does not solve the problem of fashioning a successful foreign policy. Instead, it obscures and dilutes the precise meaning of an important political term that defines our century's most ghastly experience with politics.

PETER STERN

Chicago, Illinois

WALTER LAQUEUR writes:

I have learned a great deal from Richard Lowenthal in the past, but I am reluctant to accept his thesis that there can be no totalitarianism without a profoundly utopian faith. I am equally hesitant to believe that totalitarianism ought to be identified with the personal rule of Stalin, Hitler, and Mao. These dictators certainly imposed their own personal mark on their period, and since they are all dead, this specific form of despotism does indeed belong to history. But Caesarism did not die with Julius Caesar, and I doubt whether totalitarianism is inseparably connected with one person or a handful of persons. Experience so far shows that it is one specific form—not the only possible one—of modern dictatorship.

I have never liked the label "post"—whether post-totalitarian, post-modern, or post-materialist. It has frequently proved to be premature, and in any case tells us little about the specific character of the new elements which have replaced totalitarianism, modernism, materialism, etc. To talk about a post-Stalinist era makes sense, but for the time being I see no reason to go beyond this.

I am in considerable sympathy with Mihajlo Mihajlov who, like many émigrés from the East, was struck on his arrival in the West by the innocence of some of his interlocutors (including some of the experts) and their inability to understand what life in a totalitarian society is really like. Hence the conclusion of Mr. Mihajlov and his fellow émigrés that only those who have lived in totalitarian societies can appreciate the full extent of unfreedom there. It is with this in mind that he then criticizes me for failing to understand the "qualitative difference" between totalitarianism and authoritarianism.

I am willing to admit that having lived in a society of this kind does aid the understanding; I can think of several experts in this country and in Western Europe whose horizon would be broadened by prolonged exposure to the realities of life in such a regime, not as privileged and inviolate foreigners but as natives. However, I myself did spend some of my formative years in a totalitarian regime and (with all due respect to Roman Redlich, with whose writings I am familiar) I do not need any inspiration or guidance on this score. Mr. Mihajlov seems to have overlooked something I said at the very beginning of my article—that there is a "qualitative difference" between totalitarianism and authoritarianism; if so, what is the dispute about?

I did not argue, as A. Lawrence Chickering claims, that there is no basis for worry about the advance of totalitarianism in the Third World or little need to act against such regimes. I noted, rather, that prospects for totalitarianism in the Third World are, on the whole, not that good, which is not the same thing. Since all generalizations are misleading and since the Third World is so heterogeneous in character, I should perhaps have said "in most parts of the Third World," for there are, indeed, exceptions.

Mr. Chickering believes that most Western intellectuals advocate Marxism and he regards this as the greatest threat of totalitarianism. Though it is true that Marxism has been quite influential among the intelligentsia in some countries, most intellectuals have never been champions of totalitarianism, not even in 1955 when Raymond Aron wrote *The Opium of the Intellectuals*. Today, Mr. Chickering's claim is less true than ever in all Western countries known to me. There is still a great deal of nonsense said and written in these circles; there is still a great reluctance to face realities in world affairs—but it is simply not correct to say either that most Western intellectuals are Marxists or that they want totalitarian regimes.

I don't think I misinterpreted Hannah Arendt, as Peter Stern seems to believe. Totalitarian regimes have engaged in mass terror, but so have others which have not been totalitarian. If the regime is strong and self-confident, the mere threat of terror may suffice. Focusing on mass terror and disregarding other factors is therefore not at all helpful and is, in part, misleading. Nor did I "overemphasize foreign-policy factors." I was not concerned with "formulating foreign policy," though it is an important topic—for another article.

Italian Jews

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am responding to Fernanda Eberstadt's article, "Reading Primo Levi" [October 1985]. I neither wish to nor am I able to discuss Miss Eberstadt's opinions on the literary merits of my books; to our common good fortune, in your country as in mine, freedom of criticism exists. I would like, however, to comment on several passages in the article.

1. "It was only with the first signs of a decisive Allied victory and with the collapse of the fascist regime on July 25, 1943, that Levi found within himself the will to resist (p. 43). This assertion amounts to an accusation of opportunism, and it strikes me as insulting. I was not the only one to take up arms so late. I am not speaking here of the minuscule Italian Jewish community, but the entire resistance movement against the Nazis, in all of Europe, did not begin until after the German invasion; before that, it would not have made sense. A soldier, even if animated by the best will in the world, does not mobilize alone, spontaneously, against an enemy who is not there. The decision to fight militarily was taken when it was possible to take it, but my anti-fascist commitment, and that of my family and the

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group of friends I belong to, goes back many years earlier (see, for example, the chapters "Zinc" and "Iron" in *The Periodic Table*), in fact, to the years of my adolescence.

A little further on: at the moment of my arrest by the fascists, "Levi . . . thought it safer . . . to declare himself a Jew." That was the least important part of the motives that led me to declare myself a Jew. I expressed them clearly in *The Periodic Table* (p. 134 in the American edition): "Partly because I was tired, partly out of an irrational digging in of pride."

2. On p. 45 and elsewhere I am accused of omission: that is, of not having tried to demonstrate that the slaughter of the Jews was provoked by the Nazi terror and by Hitler's racist ideology. Such a drastic statement can spring only from an extremely superficial reading of my books, especially *If This Is a Man* (now reissued in English under the title *Survival in Auschwitz*). Even if one simply relies on the narrated facts, the revulsion against and condemnation of Nazism leap from every page.

Moreover, the explanation which Miss Eberstadt seems to put forward—that Jews are persecuted where and when they tend to assimilate—seems to me false, or at least not generally true. They weren't assimilated in Spain in 1500, and yet they were burned or expelled. They were assimilated in Italy, where they would have remained undisturbed or almost so if it had not been for the German invasion in the course of World War II. They were and are assimilated in Bulgaria, whose (pro-fascist) government opposed their deportation. They rejected assimilation in Poland and Russia in the last century and were paid back with pogroms. In short, I see no correlation between assimilation (desired or attained) and anti-Semitism. The anti-Semite hates the Jew no matter what: if he assimilates, because he "tries to hide himself"; if he remains faithful to tradition and religion, "because he is different."

3. I am accused of irreligion. I am not religious; furthermore, the experience of Auschwitz led many religious people, Jewish and not, to doubt. All the same, I profoundly respect, and sometimes envy, those who have the support of a faith. The pious Lithuanian Jew on whom Miss Eberstadt dwells (p. 45) is plainly a positive character, and the episode described in the story in which he appears really happened. The line of reasoning has been misunderstood: it is known to everyone (even to me) that "cooking" on Yom Kippur is prohibited, but the discussion described hinges on whether it is permitted to "keep the soup warm," that is, not to let it get cold. Whether this is allowed or not I personally do not know; my character, Ezra, maintains that it is not.

As for the suspension of the fast by rabbinical authorities, Miss Eberstadt must take my word for it; there was no communication between the camps and the outside world, and Ezra could not have been aware of this concession. However, in my opinion, he observed the fast because of his personal heroic zeal, and I remember quite well that he was not the only one.

In none of my books does there appear a malevolent representation of religious zeal; however, the way in which quotations taken from my books are used does seem inexplicably malevolent.

4. Even the characters in *If Not Now, When?* are not very religious. This fact should not surprise or scandalize anyone: most of them were born and raised in the Soviet Union, where all religions, and the Jewish religion in particular, were openly discouraged.

5. I am implicitly criticized for being assimilated. I am. There do not exist Jews in the Diaspora who are not, to a greater or lesser degree, if for nothing else than for the fact that they speak the language of the country in which they live. I reassert, for myself and for everyone, the right to choose the level of assimilation that best suits their culture and their environment.

I would finally like to say to Miss Eberstadt that likening me to Ausonius is inappropriate. I have not retired, like that late Roman gentleman, to cultivate roses and compose anagrams, nor have I ever eaten oysters; on the contrary, my civic involvement has been daily and constant, a fact well known not only in Italy. But I must thank Miss Eberstadt nevertheless for the praise she has bestowed on me, despite her manifest distaste.

PRIMO LEVI

Turin, Italy

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I know a hatchet job when I see it, and certainly Fernanda Eberstadt's article on Primo Levi in your October issue qualifies for honors in the field. Usually such articles, which are not written (and edited) in good faith, do not deserve a comment, since intelligent people can be relied upon to have a suitable reaction. However, I must take up one single point, since I realize that historical memories are short and many (even those with good will) may consider justifiable a statement which is both absurd and deeply insulting. I refer to this sentence in Miss Eberstadt's article; "It was only with the first signs of a decisive Allied victory and with the collapse of the fascist regime on July 5, 1943, that Levi found within himself the will to resist."

The fact is that the organized resistance movement in Italy began at that date, for when Mussolini fell, Italy became an occupied country, occupied by the German army. So the sentence is absurd. It is also deeply insulting to Levi, because it implies that he, a twenty-two-year-old student and a Jew, was watching the war bulletins carefully to see which way to jump.

I demand an apology to him not only from the author of the article but also from the editors of COMMENTARY, who I am sure go thoroughly over everything published in their magazine.

RAYMOND ROSENTHAL

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Upon reading Fernanda Eberstadt's article on Primo Levi, I was terribly disappointed to discover that she belongs to that class of reviewers who delight in attacking their subjects. . . .

Miss Eberstadt's approach to Primo Levi's works appears almost defensive. When Levi speaks of his own experiences—whether they concern his time in Auschwitz or vignettes of Italian Jewish life—she seems willing grudgingly to grant him some limited success. But when his literary talent focuses on the culture of other Jewish communities, Miss Eberstadt is vicious and unforgiving.

In discussing Levi's *If Not Now, When?*, a novel about the adventures of a band of East European Jewish partisans during World War II, Miss Eberstadt offers no room for literary license and is disappointed to discover that the author has portrayed these individuals on a human scale. But her criticism that he fails to bring his characters to life is the most ludicrous of all,

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particularly since it follows three paragraphs detailing the complexities of some of the novel's protagonists.

Miss Eberstadt nevertheless seems less troubled by artistic style than by Levi's background and credentials for writing on such matters. In summing up her reasons for judging the novel a "failure," she suggests that the distance "between Turin and the forests of Eastern Europe" proved too far for Levi to bridge. . . . Miss Eberstadt's motives for devoting the first three pages of her article to the regurgitation of Italian Jewish statistics that are irrelevant to her analysis are clear. She is on the one hand establishing her supposed command of the material, while on the other hand preparing the reader for her conclusion that an assimilated Italian Jew is incapable of capturing the richness or vibrancy of Jewish life in the ghettos of the Pale of Settlement.

While it is true that Italian Jewry achieved a much higher level of acculturation and assimilation than most other European Jewries, it is irresponsible to ignore the vibrancy of Jewish life that has existed there historically. . . . Jewish learning and culture have always burned in the small Italian Jewish community. The most preposterous of all Miss Eberstadt's statements, however, is that Levi "himself hailed from a country in which the Jew had *never* been a stranger" (emphasis in the original). Anyone who is at all familiar with either the development of modern anti-Semitism or the history of Italy's 2,000-year-old Jewish community must know that the very word "ghetto" was coined in Italy. . . .

Perhaps if Miss Eberstadt were to spend less time coming to grand conclusions and more time studying her material, she would be able to offer a valuable critique of Primo Levi's works. While I would not venture to offer myself as a dispassionate reader of Levi, both as a descendant of Italian Jewry and a not-at-all-distant relative of the author, I believe his works received a cursory and premeditated analysis in Miss Eberstadt's article. This is particularly startling when compared with the outstanding reviews he has been accorded in other respected publications, some of which tout him to be of Nobel Prize stature.

ALAN VITERBI
Councilman
West Hollywood, California

FERNANDA EBERSTADT writes:

To judge from the contentious, not to say litigious, nature of these letters one might think I had written a full-scale assault on Primo Levi's life and character, not a piece of literary analysis (the longest, I believe, he has received in this country) in which praise and admiration figured amply along with criticism. Perhaps the interested reader will be moved to consult the original, not the caricature that emerges from these responses.

Primo Levi's first objection is to my assertion that it was only after the fall of Mussolino that "he found within himself the will to resist." (Since the letter of his American translator, Raymond Rosenthal, raises the same issue, I hope Mr. Rosenthal will consider himself answered by my reply.) Let me say at the outset that Mr. Levi misreads me sadly in imagining that I wished by such a statement to charge him with opportunism. I am the more surprised by his displeasure as it was precisely from his own book, *The Periodic Table*, that I took this information.

The sentence which offends Mr. Levi occurs in my essay at the end of a long passage in which I sought to explain the predicament of his generation—a generation of young Italians, Christians and Jews, who grew up under fascism (Mr. Levi was only three years old when Mussolini came to power) and who were in a sense sapped by it. Though his own "anti-fascist commitment" undoubtedly went back many years, nevertheless in *The Periodic Table* Mr. Levi adroitly focuses on his profound demoralization, and that of his generation: how, ignorant of even the possibility of active resistance to a regime they found "clownish and improvident," he and his friends retreated from political reality into a world of poetry, conversation, chaste infatuations, country outings, and, for himself, science. Describing their life in the years 1941-42, Mr. Levi writes: "Neither in us or more generally in our generation, whether Aryan or Jew, had the idea yet gained ground that one must and could resist fascism. Our resistance at that time was passive and was limited to rejection, isolation, and avoiding contamination."

In this state of alienation, which Mr. Levi describes so well, the war seemed like nothing more than an ugly stalemate between two distant and unreal giants: "Perhaps in the end [the Allies] would win—but it was their business, they were rich and powerful. . . ." But then everything changed: "In November came the Allied landings in North Africa, in December came the Russian resistance, and finally, victory at Stalingrad, and we realized that the war had drawn closer and that history had resumed its march. In the space of a few weeks each of us matured, more so than during the previous twenty years." That these historic events—compounded by the fall of the fascist regime the following July—should have acted as a kind of catalyst moving a very demoralized twenty-two-year-old to action is no disgrace.

Mr. Levi's accompanying argument, that the resistance *to Nazism* did not begin in Italy until after the German invasion, strikes me as both redundant and irrelevant. That there was no armed Italian resistance to a foreign power until that power had invaded goes without saying. But as Mr. Levi knows far better than I, the *anti-fascist* resistance movement in Italy was active as early as the 1920's, when *Giustizia è Libertà* flourished under the guidance of such Turinese heroes (many of them alumni of Primo Levi's own school) as Leone Ginzburg, the Rosselli brothers, Carlo Levi, Vittorio Foa, and Giulio Einaudi. Something of the strength and durability of this anti-fascist organization will be suggested when I say that two decades later, and after the imprisonment, exile, and murder of its main protagonists, when the young Primo Levi took up arms, it was *Giustizia è Libertà* with which he hoped to become affiliated.

My authority for stating that, during his interrogation by the Italian fascists, Primo Levi thought it safer to identify himself as a Jew than as a partisan comes from his own *Survival in Auschwitz*. In the opening chapter he writes: "During the interrogation that followed [my arrest], I preferred to admit my status of 'Italian citizen of Jewish race.' I felt that otherwise I would be unable to justify my presence in places too secluded even for an evacuee; while I believed (wrongly as was subsequently seen) that the admission of my political activity would have meant torture and certain death."

It is indeed true that Mr. Levi's loathing of Nazism is transparent on every page of *Survival in Auschwitz*—and, as I suggested in my

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POLISH-JEWISH STUDIES
An Appeal for Support

The Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies was founded in Oxford following the International Conference on Polish-Jewish Relations in Modern History held at Somerville College, Oxford, September 1984. The scholars present on that occasion who had come from Israel, Poland, South Africa, Western Europe and North America decided to create a permanent institution in which the history and culture of Polish Jews could be examined in a scholarly and dispassionate manner. In addition, The American Foundation for Polish-Jewish Studies, which is associated with the Institute in Oxford, has recently been established in Boston.

The aim of the Institute is to further research into Polish Jewry on an interdisciplinary basis, and to make the results available to the public by means of lectures, seminars, conferences, a variety of publications and documentary films. To this end the Institute has established close links with scholars representing a number of disciplines, such as: history, sociology, anthropology, folklore, linguistics, literature and politics. The Institute has already been cooperating with universities and academic institutions in Israel, Poland, the United Kingdom, the United States and elsewhere to achieve this goal. Thanks to this cooperation the Institute has been able to establish an international annual, POLIN: *A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies*, with a distinguished editorial board, to be published by Blackwells in Oxford. In addition, the Institute and the Foundation intend:

- to facilitate academic exchanges between the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Israel and Poland;
- to sponsor international conferences;
- to translate scholarly literature in East European and Jewish languages into English;
- to publish the proceedings of the Oxford Conference of 1984 and those of future conferences which have already been planned in Cracow (1986), Rome (1987), Jerusalem (1988) and an annual conference in Oxford;
- to create a fund for Judaica scholars and students wishing to visit Poland or perhaps other countries in Eastern Europe for language study, to use archives, libraries and museums, to teach at universities;
- to create a fund for scholarships and grants for Polish and other East European scholars and students wishing to visit Oxford, Jerusalem, New York and elsewhere to learn Hebrew and/or Yiddish and to take up Jewish studies;
- to establish an annual Emmanuel Ringelblum Memorial Lecture at Oxford University in cooperation with Yad Vashem and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem which will bring to Oxford leading scholars in the field of Holocaust Studies.

All these activities require financial support. We very much hope you will contribute generously to a venture from which we believe Jewish scholars, students and indeed Jews of all walks of life have a great deal to gain.

The American Foundation for Polish-Jewish Studies in Boston is already registered as a nonprofit corporation and all contributions are fully tax deductible. In order to achieve their goals, the Institute and the Foundation require an endowment of $1—1.5 million. This will enable them to spend $100,000 per annum towards all the projects listed above. In this context it should be stressed that the Foundation needs "seed money" in order to raise an endowment of that scale.

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article, the transmission of such white-hot hatred through so mild and unassuming a literary manner is extremely effective—but again Mr. Levi hedges. My objection was not to any failure to condemn Nazism but to the way in which, by resorting to a kind of philosophical universalism, this book glosses over the fact that the slaughter was indeed a slaughter of Jews. For all Mr. Levi's devout attention to detail and his eye for those unconscious gestures by which a man reveals his soul, for all his scientist's curiosity about the minutiae of national and social and professional distinctions, he never intimates that what these diverse strangers—Hungarians, Frenchmen, Poles, Greeks—herded together in rude barracks had in common was their Jewishness, nor does he mention that many continued at great cost to practice their faith within the camps—a sight which to an inexperienced young Italian must have been arresting, to say the least.

I "accused" Primo Levi not of hostility to religion but rather of having a tin ear for it. Although in *Moments of Reprieve*, his new collection of stories, Mr. Levi sets out to portray the religious life of devout Jews in the camps, and in *If Not Now, When?* to suggest something of the flavor of the Jewish tradition in which his Eastern European and Russian-born protagonists would have been steeped, in both works he proves unable to transcend, either through learning or through intuitive understanding, his own self-consciousness and skepticism. Thus Judaism here and elsewhere in his work emerges as something naive and archaic, a collection of colorful saws. The failure, as I tried to make clear in my article, is not a moral but an imaginative one.

As for Mr. Levi's Lithuanian watchmaker (who occupied all of two sentences in my article), let me note once again the permanent injunction upon Jews that small children, the aged, the sick, and those in danger of death must break the Yom Kippur fast, and the particular dispensation made *within* the camps, and known to all believers, permitting inmates to eat on fast days in order to preserve life. Mr. Levi's Ezra may well have deemed himself sufficiently hale to withstand such a privation, but my point had to do with his improbable ignorance of the religious context in which he was making this decision, and with Mr. Levi's own confusion over whether lighting or making use of fire is forbidden by Jewish law or merely, as he states, "considered inadvisable" by "some commentators."

With regard to the issue of assimilation, nowhere in my article did I suggest that there is any connection between assimilation and persecution of the Jews, nor can I imagine by what misreading—or mistranslation—Mr. Levi could have imputed to me so grotesque a notion. Anti-Semitism comes from anti-Semitism, and little or nothing Jews do or do not do can affect this evil when it is bent on its worst. Indeed, one of the more tragic illusions animating Jewish life in hostile lands has been the very belief that either by an excess of patriotism or philanthropy, or by making himself invisible, or, conversely, by sticking to his distinctive dress and language—in short, by some modification of behavior—a Jew can avert this rage against his people.

Nor did I ever call into question Mr. Levi's right to be an assimilated Jew. On the contrary, we must thank, not God, but democracy and a tolerant people that in his country Jews have been so free either to remain apart or to adopt the national identity. To speak more personally, I could never wish that Primo Levi knew more Talmud and less Homer, Catullus, or Descartes, for I can think of few contemporary writers who have put a humanist education to more subtle use. Still, it would be foolish to deny that just as pious Jews who keep themselves apart from the general culture pay a price for their ignorance of secular life and learning, so too does assimilation exact its costs.

My invocation of Ausonius was a slight and hypothetical one. In *Survival in Auschwitz* one sees the spectacle of a profoundly civilized man, the consummate product of a high and rich civilization, subjected to the very negation of civilization. To conceive of a comparable collision of humanism and inhumanity, I speculated that had Ausonius, the poet and memoirist of late Latin antiquity (a man, also, like Mr. Levi, noted for a long record of "civic involvement") lived another fifteen years to witness the sack of Rome and to see the Northern barbarians lay waste the culture he had known, he too might have been jolted from his ravishing minor key into the strange power of speech which possesses the Primo Levi of *Survival in Auschwitz*. Yet if the analogy offends Mr. Levi, by all means let him pluck it out.

ALAN VITERBI asserts that I was wrong to find fault with *If Not Now, When?*, Primo Levi's novel about Eastern European Jewish partisans, and that I fail to do justice to Italian Jews (a puzzling charge given Mr. Viterbi's simultaneous complaint that I devoted too much space to their accomplishments). His twin grievances lead him to the conclusion that I deem no "assimilated Italian Jew" capable of "capturing the richness or vibrancy of Jewish life in the ghettos of the Pale of Settlement," a conclusion consonant with my suspicion that Mr. Viterbi has not read the works of his illustrious kinsman, since the novel he defends takes place not in the ghetto but in Central European forests and Italian drawing rooms, among mainly Marxist Zionists.

Mr. Viterbi imagines that I criticized that novel for its "literary license" or for Levi's portraying men and women "on a human scale." On the contrary. Were *If Not Now, When?* a successful work of the imagination, no one would be so pedantic as to condemn it for its flouting of historical realities (for a discussion of the latter, see Henryk Grynberg, "Primo Levi in Poland," the *New Leader*, July 1-15, 1985), any more than one would criticize Bellini's *Norma* for offering an inaccurate depiction of Druid life in Roman Britain. But the novel is an artistic failure—stiffly schematic in its plot, clumsy and mechanical in its formulations, and peopled by unreal types. On top of this, it suffers as well from inauthenticity, a serious flaw since the novel, accompanied by a lengthy bibliography, is presented by its author as a work of scholarship.

Mr. Viterbi considers my critique of Primo Levi's works both "cursory" and "premeditated." In view of the essay's length, if for no other reason, the former charge would seem inappropriate; as a critic, I take the latter as a compliment.

Hiroshima

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"The Cult of Hiroshima" by André Ryerson [October 1985], which finds "something not quite right" about commemorating the

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fortieth anniversary of the holocaust of August 6, 1945, disturbed me greatly. To see this point of view in a journal dedicated, among other goals, to preserving the memory of the horrors of the Holocaust, is astonishing. . . .

The modern world contains many dangers to mankind that do not threaten Jews as Jews, but Jews as men. The holocaust of August 6 is as likely to be repeated as is the Holocaust of Auschwitz.

Mr. Ryerson states that "those who died at Hiroshima and Nagasaki were made to do so for a reason." The deaths of innocents should not be classified and graded according to the motives of the killers. Even the Khmer Rouge have given "reasons" for the atrocities in Cambodia.

There is a hint in Mr. Ryerson's article that the residents of Hiroshima, as patriotic Japanese, were implicated in the evil doings of the Japanese warlords, and therefore were not truly wartime innocents. This line of argument could be used to justify all the massacres in recorded history. . . .

LES JENSEN

Claremont, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I was drawn to—repulsed by, rather—the title of André Ryerson's article. . . . I could just as well write a piece on Auschwitz and title it "The Cult of Auschwitz." Is Mr. Ryerson's point that Hiroshima and Nagasaki were justified? They were not—Japanese women and babies were *not* in Manchuria, nor did they pilot *kamikaze* planes. . . . The bombing of civilian populations has never been, and never will be, justifiable. Or are we now in the absolutely abominable spiritual condition where we are weighing holocausts? (Auschwitz weighs more than Hiroshima?) Innocents died in all the concentration camps and ovens—and innocents died at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Or should I say "innocence" died, to be replaced with cynicism, nuclear deterrence, and mental death? . . .

WILLIAM WITHERUP

San Anselmo, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was an undergraduate at Harvard, 1976-80, along with some 1,600 other members of the Class of '80. I attended the same classes, read the same books, endured the same pains and pleasures as the other 1,599. I was different, however, in one respect. The average age of my class at graduation was about twenty-two. I was the oldest freshman ever admitted to Harvard, sixty-seven on graduation. Moreover, I had spent the years 1942-46 in the armed services, mostly in the Navy, and mostly on destroyers. To my classmates, this experience was not only irrelevant, it was, literally, antediluvian. (I had been present at the Fall, which comes before the Flood.)

To them—my very bright, very well-educated, very aware seventeen-to-twenty-two-year-old classmates—the New Creation took place in Chicago in 1942; the sixth day was July 16, 1945, at Alamogordo; and Original Sin came upon us all (Americans, that is), August 6, 1945.

The day we sinned I was aboard a picket ship making for Guam to form up for the invasion of homeland Japan. A picket ship is a mass of electronic gear packed into a thin-hulled frigate or destroyer. Its mission: to go ahead of the fleet, to serve as its eyes and ears, to make first contact with the enemy.

The coming invasion was top secret in Washington but in the fleet we knew all about it. It dominated our messdeck and fantail discussions. And not only on our ship; on other ships the betting was long odds against our survival. If our ship had been polled on dropping the bomb—after all, we were citizens—we would have voted for our lives, even at the cost of their deaths. . . .

All of which gave me a different perspective on some things from that of my classmates.

However, when the subject of the bomb came up in class, I kept a discreet silence. Although fully matriculated and treated like any other undergraduate, I was in a way a guest at Harvard. And a guest should not challenge his host's deeply held beliefs. I did take my views to the professor, who gave me that business about anecdotal history (which did not stop them from assigning Robert of Clari's and Geoffrey of Villehardouin's anecdotes of the Crusades as sound source material). But I did accept the judgment of my betters and kept quiet when the new theology was propounded in class.

Until we got to the Holocaust. I could not be quiet about the Holocaust. It was a simple thing. The reading list in one class was lightened by films. . . . Some of the films were about the bomb. It was shown symbolically and realistically in the melted faces of its victims. One required film showed the results of a future war fought with atomic weapons. There was another film that touched on the Holocaust. . . . There were a few concentration-camp scenes, quite mild, no corpses, alive or dead. . . . We were required to attend the showing of the bomb films, charred bodies and melted faces included. Viewing the Holocaust film was voluntary because students might find it disquieting. In the judgment of this professor, a proper education required knowledge of the bomb; knowing about the Holocaust was elective.

In another class, the reading list included Elie Wiesel's *Night* and Albert Camus's *The Plague*. There were objections because the books were "too down," "too depressing." But Camus's book, fiction, was felt to be far less objectionable than Wiesel's report on the Holocaust.

A necessary comment: the professor in whose class the bomb is mandatory and the Holocaust voluntary is a renowned scholar; he was also one of the best, one of the most inspiring, teachers it was my privilege to sit before.

The trouble with anecdotes in history is that they cannot be generalized from. So no generalizations can be drawn from one man's experience at Harvard. I attended thirty-some classes out of many hundreds offered. I was taught by thirty-some professors out of many hundreds. They included some to the Left and some to the Right of the two cited above—and several who took the same, sad, hard look at the bomb as I did. My classmates ranged from hard-Right to way-out-Left, and reacted as expected. But by and large, on the average, in the main, Hiroshima was not seen as a fact of history. It was not a matter on which reasoned difference was permitted, not even an arguable ethical question. It was a given, an article of faith, a religious belief (particularly for the non-religious). By this theology, we are, individually, collectively, for all time, guilty of a sin beyond shriving.

HARRY GERSH

Menemsha, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

This fact should be added to those presented by Andre Ryerson. At the end of World War II, in August 1945, the USSR captured

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a Japanese army of 700,000; only 25,000 of these survived to return to Japan, the rest died in the Gulag.

Although these Japanese soldiers died in peacetime, not under circumstances that might contribute to victory or to ending a war, and although more Japanese were victimized by the Soviets than by both atomic bombs, . . . no "peace activist" finds fault with the USSR over this matter.

My source for this episode is a recently published history of World War II by C. L. Sulzberger, which describes the capture of the Japanese army of 700,000. I recall that Truman and his aides often called for the release of the captured Japanese. After 25,000 had been released, the USSR announced that it held no more Japanese prisoners; in other words, the rest were dead. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, in *The Gulag Archipelago*, describes the Japanese in the Gulag.

MORTIMER SIMONS
Cranston, Rhode Island

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

André Ryerson makes two distinct but related points in his article. The first is one of policy: President Truman was justified in authorizing the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki because he had reasonable belief that doing so would shorten the war appreciably, thereby saving many American (and even Japanese) lives. The second is one of fact: President Truman's belief was not only reasonable but was also correct, as indicated by evidence cited by Mr. Ryerson.

I am in complete agreement with Mr. Ryerson's first point. As to his second, I would appreciate more information. It is my recollection that a commission, "The United States Strategic Bombing Survey," the vice chairman of which was Paul Nitze, issued a report in 1946 concluding that Japan was prepared to surrender even if the atomic bombs had not been dropped. Is my recollection correct? If so, what was the basis for that report?

Mr. Ryerson's article suggests one further thought. The extent of the public reaction to Hiroshima may reflect a discriminatory attitude, but not one of ordinary ethnic discrimination. Racial differences notwithstanding, we may identify with the Japanese people because both the U.S. and Japan are highly industrialized and economically developed countries which even share recreational interests like baseball. We cooperate and compete as equals. The victims of wartime Japan, however, were underdeveloped countries with which identification is quite difficult. This distinction would, of course, not be a factor in the thinking of those for whom Hiroshima is a welcome symbol of pervasive American guilt, but it may explain why other Americans are more prone to focus on Japan's suffering than upon the suffering it inflicted on others during World War II.

JEROME LEFKOWITZ
Albany, New York

ANDRÉ RYERSON writes:

Les Jensen and William Witherup lump together, as morally equivalent events, the bombing of Hiroshima by the United States and the extermination of European Jewry by the Nazis. However well it may conform to prevailing academic fashion, such a claim reveals a massive failure to perceive the most elementary distinctions.

The Nazis rounded up peaceful citizens, on the basis of their religion and ethnicity, and deliberately massacred some six million of them with the aim of extinguishing them as a people. Not one of these three conditions obtained in the decision of the United States to drop the atomic bomb. The U.S. had been attacked by the Japanese empire and, after four years of bloody warfare, decided to use a new weapon of unprecedented power to foreshorten the war by shocking into surrender an enemy that had been unusually acculturated to prefer the glory of suicide.

The Allied decision to use the atomic bomb had both the intent, and the effect, of saving lives. The Nazi decision to exterminate the Jews had neither. If Messrs. Jensen and Witherup can grasp that difference, I should think them able to advance toward more subtle distinctions separating Harry Truman from Adolf Hitler and the United States from Nazi Germany.

On saner ground, both gentlemen raise the important issue of civilians in time of war. The industrialization of war, regrettably, by involving civilians in the manufacture of weapons, the operation of ports, railways, etc., has had the effect of removing the clear-cut earlier distinction separating soldier and civilian, and modern destructive weapons increase the difficulty even more.

Mr. Jensen objects to any hint, on my part, "that the residents of Hiroshima . . . were not truly wartime innocents." No one denies that the leadership of Japan, like that of Germany, deserves the brunt of history's condemnation for launching an aggressive war. But as in Germany, the leadership was also sustained in its dreams of conquest by popular assent and even enthusiasm. The tragedy of war stands ultimately on the manipulation of popular consent, which is most likely to be pushed in dangerous paths—and even evil ones—when the people are not free to discuss their nation's policies. That is why Soviet leaders today are at liberty to rape Afghanistan, and why we insisted after the war that Japan had to change its internal system.

It should not be forgotten that Hiroshima was the headquarters of the 2nd General Army with 25,000 troops, and was the site of numerous home factories diligently turning out parts for *kamikaze* war planes, where even men in wheelchairs worked at assembling booby traps to be set on beaches for the invading Americans. Throughout the spring and summer of 1945, millions of leaflets in Japanese, titled "Appeal to the People," were dropped from American B-29's. The leaflets stated: "You are not the enemy of America. Our enemy is the Japanese militarists, who dragged you into this war," but unfortunately "bombs have no eyes" and cannot tell the difference; America "does not wish to injure innocent people, so you had better evacuate these cities." Target cities were duly circled on the leaflet. Some 720,000 such leaflets of warning were dropped on Hiroshima two days before August 6.

The experience of Harry Gersh at Harvard is eloquent testimony to the distorted, indeed perverse, moral equations to which much of American academic life remains addicted. To claim an "equivalence" between Hiroshima and Auschwitz requires what can only be described as a metaphysical hunger in some Americans for national self-loathing, and depends on the absence of those qualities of temperament—attention to the evidence, openness to competing interpretations, the study of history in context, a capacity for critical thought—which professors are tireless in proclaiming as ideals, but in less abstract situations of the classroom

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show some difficulty in following as teachers.

Mortimer Simons has done well to recall the 675,000 Japanese POW's who apparently perished in Soviet custody, reminding us of yet another statistic in the mounting toll of dead for which totalitarian regimes in our century have been responsible.

Jerome Lefkowitz says that the "United States Strategic Bombing Survey" of 1946 questioned the need for the use of atomic weapons against Japan. The problem with such military surveys is that they pay great attention to the extent of purely material destruction, but lack comparable instruments to calibrate a nation's will to fight. In the view of American intelligence (the OSS), the American military was consistently overoptimistic in translating material destruction into enemy demoralization; the OSS estimated in the summer of 1945 (not yet knowing that atomic bombs would be used) that it would take at least another year of intense conventional warfare to compel Japan's surrender. The OSS noted that despite the destruction of heavy industry in Japanese cities, underground and village factories were still turning out between 1,200 and 1,500 combat airplanes per month in the summer of 1945, and that the bulk of the Japanese army on the mainland had not yet seen combat and was eager to fight.

But in the final analysis, the testimony of facts must take precedence: before the atomic bombs were dropped, the Japanese treated the Potsdam requirement of unconditional surrender with contempt; after, they agreed within days to "bear the unbearable" and surrender. (On August 6, Admiral Yonai, the naval minister, scrawled an ultra-secret memo, "Hiroshima destroyed by atomic weapon. This war is lost.") But even then the war party refused to acknowledge defeat, a palace coup was attempted, and civilians in several locations rebelled against the government, for the first time in the war, in protest at the very idea of surrender. The Emperor narrowly pulled off an orderly conclusion to the war. The role played by the atomic weapon in the Emperor's mind can be seen in his address to the nation, in which he made no mention of Russia's entry into the war against Japan, but spoke rather of a "new and most cruel bomb" whose continued use would lead to the "ob-

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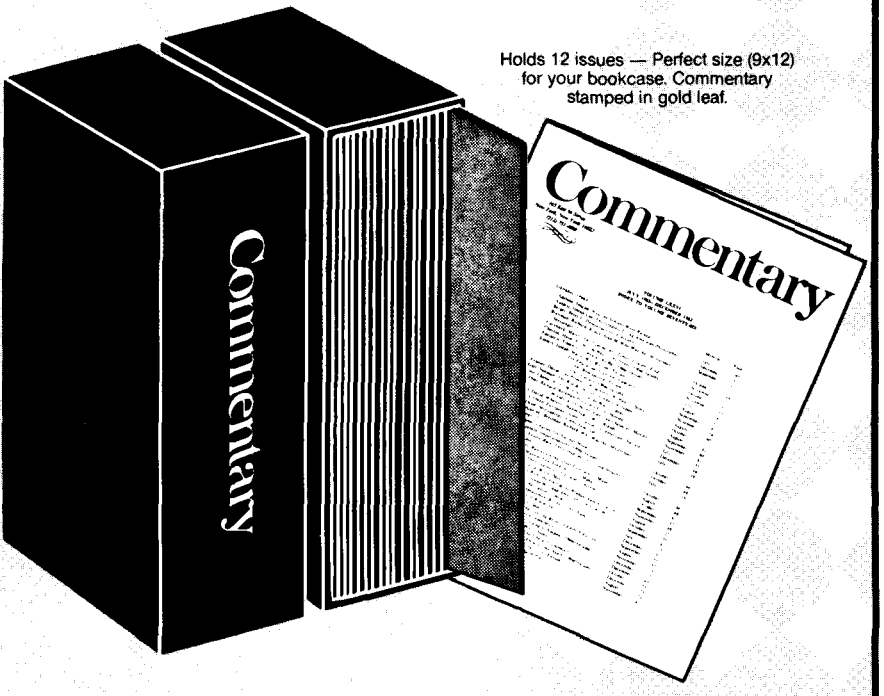

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literation of the Japanese nation." The primacy of the atomic weapon in prompting a quick surrender, therefore, is undeniable.

Mr. Lefkowitz's observations on the American tendency to sympathize with the Japanese while ignoring the victims of their aggression and cruelty are pertinent and thought-provoking. Let us recall, in passing, what China paid for Japanese dreams of conquest: according to Calvocoressi and Wint in *Total War*, the low estimate is 2.5 million deaths, the upper estimate is 13.5 million deaths.

The lesson of this entire matter is that real life, as opposed to facile moralizing, may sometimes force upon us very limited choices, each of them unpleasant. We must then choose, from a bad lot, the least damaging course of action. Few critics of the Hiroshima decision are willing to face this contingent fact of life. They stare instead at the damage that flowed from the lesser evil. Historians who ignore the projected toll of casualties, Japanese as well as American, that would have attended a land invasion of Kyushu and Honshu are guilty, at the very least, of a basic failure of historical imagination.

Resistance in Vietnam

To the Editor of Commentary:

Maggie Gallagher and Charles Bork make a persuasive case for support for international resistance movements in "The New Freedom Fighters" [September 1985]. However, . . . the authors fail to mention Vietnam as a Communist state with an active resistance movement. Although information from within the country is scarce, the rapid proliferation of resistance organizations is readily documented. From August 1975 through June 1977, no fewer than eight independent groups were formed. In December 1984, the Vietnamese government was forced to change its policy of denying the existence of these movements. During a February visit to the United States, Le Quoc Tuy, a leader of one of the major resistance organizations, the United Front of Patriotic Forces for the Liberation of Vietnam, explained why.

According to Tuy, Vietnamese guerrillas operating south of the 17th parallel receive an irregular flow of military hardware from members of the Communist forces who are sympathetic to the resistance. In December 1984, twenty-one members of the United Front were arrested during a security sweep that uncovered a mammoth arms cache in a suburb of Ho Chi Minh City. Their trial was turned into a major spectacle to which representatives of the Western press were invited. However, the trial and subsequent execution of three group leaders received very little coverage in the media. Le Quoc Tuy's brother, an ex-ARVN officer, was one of those who died before a firing squad.

During a Washington press conference, a defiant Tuy stated: "I want to tell Pham Van Dong [Chairman, Council of Advisers, Socialist Republic of Vietnam] that he is dead wrong in saying that there is no resistance whatsoever in Vietnam."

Rolf Dammann
Freedom Federation
Washington, D.C.

1945 & After

To the Editor of Commentary:

John Colville, in "How the West Lost the Peace in 1945" [September 1985], says more in six-and-a-half pages than some historians have said in hundreds of pages. He is concise, to the point, and fair to the leading participants. His observations concerning General Eisenhower are particularly relevant. And his conclusion that Harry Truman arrived in the White House "at least three months too late" is sound.

But Mr. Colville does not go beyond 1945, and does not ask if the "lost peace" could have been salvaged subsequently, at least in part. I believe this is important, because 1945 was not the only lost opportunity in dealing with the Soviets.

After the war, the U.S. rapidly demobilized a 10-million-man military force, in the naive belief that the Soviet Union would act responsibly and cooperate with the West in the pursuit of a just peace. The naive liberals, however, were not the only ones responsible for our rapid demobilization. Conservative forces (e.g., the Chicago *Tribune*) openly asserted that the Democrats wanted to maintain a large army as a way of helping them stay in power, and published top-secret U.S. intelligence documents in an attempt to prove their case. But blame also rests on the British and American peoples, who had become (as Mr. Colville points out) "unwavering admirers of Russia's successful resistance" so that "any overt hostility to the Soviet Union would have caused an uproar in both the United Kingdom and the United States."

Yet democratic leaders must sometimes go against the popular will, confident that once the rightness of policies is demonstrated the people will give them their support. One of those times was after the Soviets had clearly shown that they had no intention of abiding by some of the Yalta agreements, notably the promise of "free and unfettered elections" in Poland. This was fairly clear by mid-1945, but the West could also have acted in 1946 or even 1947.

The West could have said to the Soviets: "We promised the Polish people a restoration of freedom and free and unfettered elections, and we are moving our military forces in to see to it that this promise is fulfilled." There is nothing that the Soviets could have done but given in. If we had any doubts in 1945 or 1946 or 1947 about the Soviet response, they would have been dispelled with the publication in 1948 of the Soviet-Yugoslav correspondence, in which Stalin told Tito that he could not have helped him on the question of Trieste because the Soviet Union had been terribly weakened by the war and could not possibly have risked conflict with the West. . . .

Alex N. Dragnich
Charlottesville, Virginia

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . The Atlantic Charter, proclaimed by Roosevelt and Churchill in 1941, called for the renunciation of territorial aggrandizement, the right of peoples to choose the form of government under which they would live, and the restoration of sovereign rights and self-government to those who had been forcibly deprived of them.

From hindsight of more than forty years, it is clear that if the principles of the Atlantic Charter had been followed, we would have neither NATO nor the Warsaw Pact, and of course not the arms race and the mortal danger we are now facing. It is also clear that at the time the Soviets were in no position to contest the enforcement of the provisions of the Char-

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ter. Why then have they been violated?

We read in Churchill's *The Hinge of Fate* that Churchill told Roosevelt on April 23, 1942: "The increasing gravity of war has led me to feel that the principles of the Atlantic Charter ought not to be construed so as to deny Russia the frontiers she occupied when Germany attacked her. This was the basis on which Russia acceded to the Charter."

To understand the ethical, political, and even philosophical meaning of this recommendation, we should replace the words "the frontiers she occupied when Germany attacked her" with a quotation from the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of August 23, 1939: "The spheres of influence of Germany and the USSR shall be bounded approximately by the line of the rivers Narew, Vistula, and San." Thus, Stalin insisted on maintaining the sphere of influence Hitler had given him as a reward for signing the pact which enabled Hitler to start World War II. In other words, Stalin's condition for acceding to the obligations of the Atlantic Charter was from the beginning that he be granted the right to violate it.

This situation had all the elements of tragedy, not only for Poland but for the whole world. . . .

On October 9, 1944, when Churchill negotiated with Stalin in Moscow, he proposed, according to his *Triumph and Tragedy*: "So far as Britain and Russia are concerned, how would it do for you to have 90 percent predominance in Rumania, for us 90 percent in Greece, and go fifty-fifty in Yugoslavia? . . ." Thus long before 1945 the commitment to respect the self-determination of nations and the principle of nonaggrandizement was violated by the very authors of these policies. It is one of the tragedies of our time that Roosevelt and Churchill, the two greatest statesmen of our century, who saved democracy and showed us the way to create a peaceful world, violated their commitment and returned the world to the era of spheres of interests. . . .

EUGEN LOEBL

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

One question that remains after reading John Colville's "How the West Lost the Peace in 1945" . . . is why, rather than how, we did so. As an Englishman, Mr. Colville is too polite to suggest that it was because of our historic naiveté and pragmatism. Thus, the day before he died FDR wrote to Churchill: "I would minimize the general Soviet problem as much as possible, because these problems, in one form or another, seem to arise every day, and most of them straighten out."

In a similar . . . vein, Roosevelt's aide, Harry Hopkins, said after the Yalta conference: "The Russians had proved that they could be reasonable and farseeing and there wasn't any doubt in the minds of the President or any of us that we could live with them and get along with them peacefully for as far into the future as any of us could imagine." . . .

Moreover, this pragmatic naiveté in the face of ideology was bipartisan. It was, after all, General Eisenhower who, as Mr. Colville points out, refused to allow our troops to take Berlin before the Red Army could get there, as might easily have been done with little sacrifice. How could even a tough-minded pragmatist like Ike have been so mistaken despite the warnings of Churchill? I think the answer can be found in Eisenhower's wartime retrospective, *Crusade in Europe*, where we find that Ike was much taken by Marshall Zhukov, to whom he gave the highest form of pragmatic praise: Zhukov was "sincere" in his devotion to Communism. . . .

It is from these experiences that Eisenhower concludes:

> Americans at that time—or at least we in Berlin—saw no reason why the Russian system of government, and democracy as practiced by the Western Allies, could not live side by side in the world, provided each respected the rights, the territory, and the convictions of the other, and each system avoided overt or covert action against the integrity of the other. Because implicit in Western democracy is respect for the rights of others, it seemed natural to us that this "live and let live" type of agreement could be achieved and honestly kept.

. . . But one cannot simply "live and let live" with ideological murderers. Ike's great mistake—as well as Roosevelt and Hopkins's—was to think otherwise. . . .

KENNETH ZARETZKE

Arlington, Virginia

JOHN COLVILLE writes:

Although, with hindsight, we may condemn the myopia of Roosevelt and Hopkins, of Eisenhower and occasionally (though much less often) of Winston Churchill, it is wise to remember three things.

First, although the Russians continually declined to let us know of their military plans, and were less than gracious in acknowledging the great material help they received from both America and Britain, they were nonetheless fighting heroically and losing many more men than their Western allies. Their efforts did seem to demand both admiration and assistance.

Secondly, in those pre-atomic days a long struggle against Japan was visualized after the defeat of Germany. It was estimated that we should lose half-a-million men in landing on the main Japanese islands. So Russia's help and involvement in the Pacific seemed vital on both sides of the Atlantic. This was a prime reason for the Western appeasement of Stalin at Yalta.

Thirdly, public opinion in both America and Britain was vociferously pro-Russian. The Soviet armies' courage and sacrifice crowned them with haloes. Small things shift public opinion: in Britain it was not until Stalin refused to let some dozen Russian girls who had married British soldiers during the war rejoin their husbands that anti-Soviet feeling was generated. Molotov's consistent "*nyet*" to all reasonable suggestions brought far less popular reaction, though in 1948 the need for the Berlin airlift confirmed the suspicions created by "the Russian wives."

Psychoanalysts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The November 1985 issue contains a letter I wrote concerning Dr. Robert Jay Lifton.

Regrettably, my letter could be read to suggest that membership in the American Academy of Psychoanalysis equates with being a "psychoanalyst." As a matter of fact, some allied scientists, who have contributed much to the field of psychoanalysis, have been invited to become Scientific Associate members of the Academy, although they may or may not see themselves as psychoanalysts. Dr. Robert Jay Lifton is a Scientific Associate member of the Academy.

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The intent of my letter was to emphasize that this organization has in no way been discredited by Dr. Robert Jay Lifton's activity.

SIDNEY S. GOLDENSOHN, M.D.
President, American Academy
of Psychoanalysis
New York City

Russian Writers

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have read with the greatest interest the discussion on Russian writers in your November 1985 letters columns occasioned by Fernanda Eberstadt's article, "Out of the Drawer and Into the West" [July 1985]. It is really instructive and, I would say, fruitful. But there is one point I feel I should comment on.

Vladimir Maximov writes: "We who were raised on the inspiring example of Thomas Wolfe, William Faulkner, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, J.D. Salinger, Saul Bellow, and many other admirable American masters. . . ." "We" means Mr. Maximov's generation (he was born in 1932). But consider the list of American authors he presents. *Only one* name was really known to the Soviet reader in the 50's—Hemingway. Faulkner was published for the first time in 1957 (a short story in a literary review) and became well-known only on the verge of the 60's. J.D. Salinger: nothing was published before the early 60's. F. Scott Fitzgerald: the second half of the 60's. Thomas Wolfe: the beginning of the 70's. Bellow: as far as I know none of his novels has been translated and published in the Soviet Union. My question is: how could Mr. Maximov's generation (my generation, in fact) have been "raised" on books it never read? Or, at least, never at the time of its "raising"?

For some reason that I cannot understand, Mr. Maximov deludes the American reading public. To correct the delusion I would recommend a wonderful book about Western literature and the Russian reader exactly at the time of Mr. Maximov's "raising": Maurice Friedberg's *A Decade of Euphoria: Western Literature in Post-Stalin Russia, 1954-64* (Indiana University Press, 1977).

SIMON MARKISH
Geneva, Switzerland

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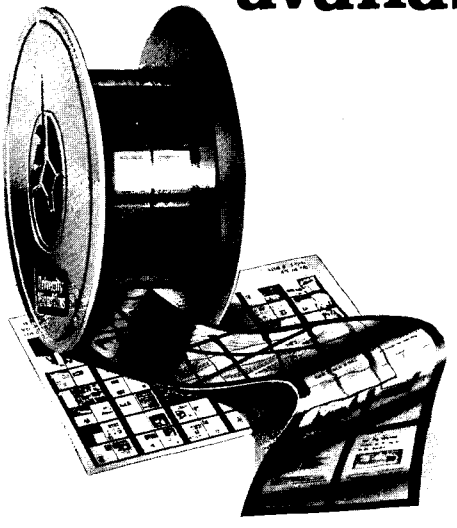

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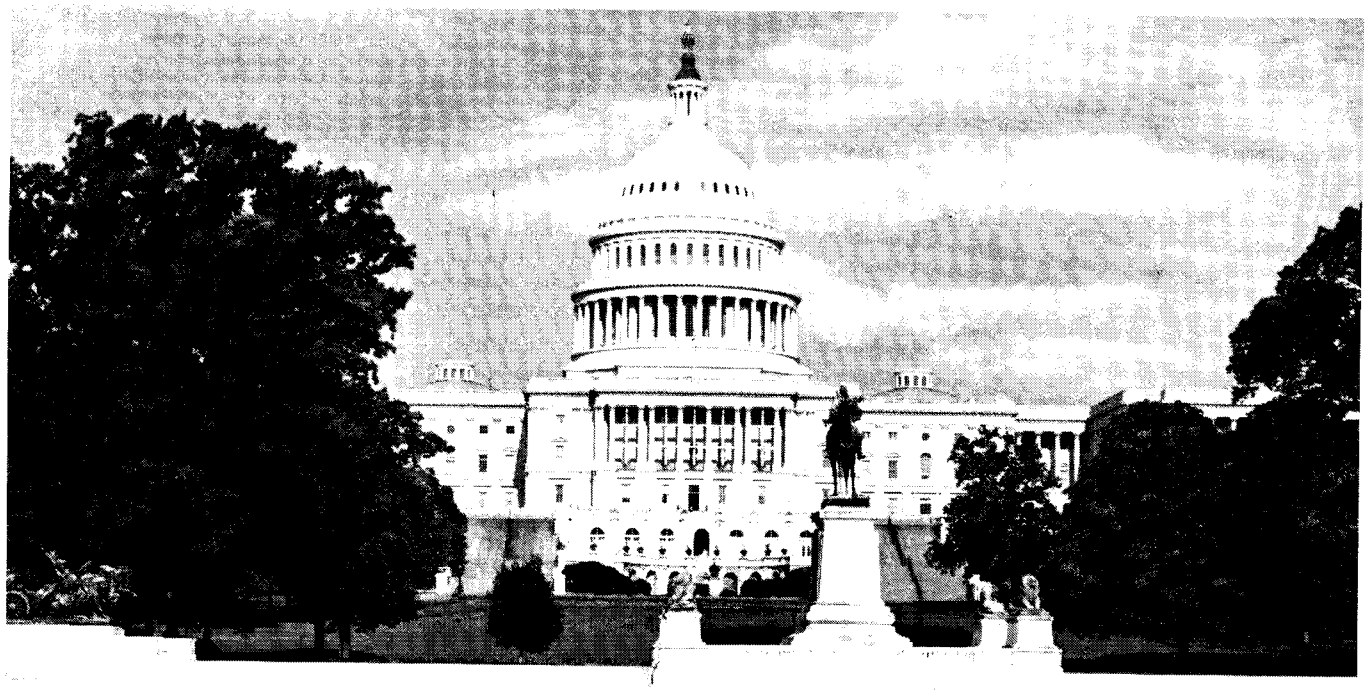

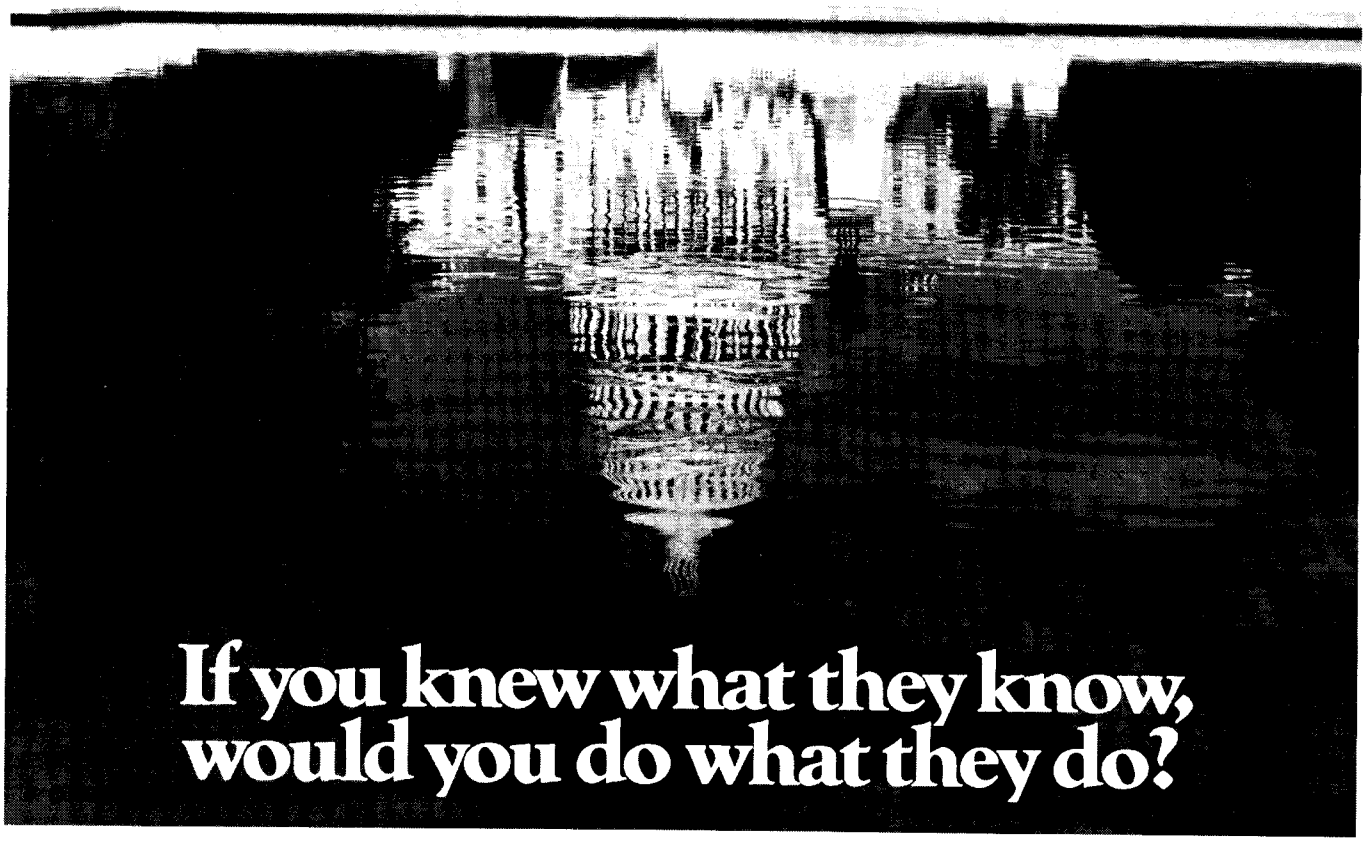

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How the Constitution Disappeared

Lino A. Graglia

ATTORNEY GENERAL Edwin Meese's recent statement in a speech to the American Bar Association that judges should interpret the Constitution to mean what it was originally intended to mean probably did not strike most people as controversial. Nevertheless it brought forth immediate denunciation by a sitting Supreme Court Justice as "doctrinaire," "arrogant," and the product of "facile historicism." "It is a view," Justice William J. Brennan, Jr. said in a speech at Georgetown University,* "that feigns self-effacing deference to the specific judgments of those who forged our original social compact," but that "in truth . . . is little more than arrogance cloaked as humility" because it is not possible to "gauge accurately the intent of the Framers on application of principle to specific, contemporary questions." The view is not only mistaken, but misguided, Justice Brennan continued, because it would require judges to "turn a blind eye to social progress and eschew adaptation of overarching principles to changes of social circumstance."

To state that judges should interpret the Constitution as intended by those who wrote and ratified it ("the Framers") is only to state the basic premise of our political-legal system that the function of judges is to apply, not to make, the law. Indeed, it would be difficult to say what interpretation of a law means if not to determine the intent of the lawmaker. Justice Brennan's angry attack on the obvious as if it were disreputable, soon joined by the attacks of his colleague Justice John Paul Stevens and a legion of media commentators, makes evident that much is at stake in this debate on a seemingly esoteric matter of constitutional interpretation. What is at stake is nothing less than the question of how the country should be governed in regard to basic issues of social policy: whether such issues should be decided by elected representatives of the people, largely on a state-by-state basis, or, as has been the case for the last three decades, primarily by a majority of the nine Justices of the United States Supreme Court for the nation as a whole.

The modern era of constitutional law began with the Supreme Court's 1954 decision in *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, holding compulsory school racial segregation and, it soon appeared, all racial discrimination by government, unconstitutional. The undeniable rightness of the decision as a matter of social policy, in effect ending legally-imposed second-class citizenship for blacks, and its eventual acceptance by the public and ratification by Congress and the President in the 1964 Civil Rights Act, gained for the Court a status and prestige unprecedented in our history. The moral superiority of decision-making by judges to decision-making by mere "politicians" seemed evident. The result was to enable the Court to move from its historic role as a brake on social change to a very different role as the primary engine of such change.

In the years since *Brown*, nearly every fundamental change in domestic social policy has been brought about not by the decentralized democratic (or, more accurately, republican) process contemplated by the Constitution, but simply by the Court's decree. The Court has decided, on a national basis and often in opposition to the wishes of a majority of the American people, issues literally of life and death, as in its decisions invalidating virtually all restrictions on abortion and severely restricting the use of capital punishment. It has decided issues of public security and order, as in its decisions greatly expanding the protection of the criminally accused and limiting state power to control street demonstrations and vagrancy, and issues of public morality, as in the decisions disallowing most state controls of pornography, obscenity, and nudity. The Court has both prohibited the states from making provision for prayer in the schools and disallowed most forms of aid, state or federal, to religious schools.

LINO A. GRAGLIA is Rex G. Baker and Edna Heflin Baker Professor of Constitutional Law at the University of Texas Law School. His books include *Disaster by Decree: The Supreme Court Decisions on Race and the Schools.*

* "The Constitution of the United States: Contemporary Ratification," delivered at a "Text and Teaching Symposium," October 12, 1985.

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It has required that children be excluded from their neighborhood public schools and bused to more distant schools in order to increase school racial integration; ordered the reapportionment of state and federal legislatures on a "one-man-one-vote" basis; invalidated most of the law of libel and slander; and disallowed nearly all legal distinctions on the basis of sex, illegitimacy, and alienage. The list could easily be extended, but it should be clear that in terms of the issues that determine the nature and quality of life in a society, the Supreme Court has become our most important institution of government.

Since his appointment to the Court by President Eisenhower in 1956, Justice Brennan has participated in all of the Court's major constitutional decisions, has consistently voted in favor of Court intervention in the political process, and often was a leader on the Court in reaching the decision to intervene. Indeed, he has ordinarily differed with the Court only in that he would often go even farther in disallowing political control of some issues; he would, for example, go farther than the Court has in disallowing state regulation of the distribution of pornographic material and he would prohibit capital punishment in all cases. If the Court has been our most important institution of government for the past three decades, Justice Brennan—although his name is probably unknown to the great majority of his fellow citizens—has surely been our most important government official. To argue that the Supreme Court should confine itself or be confined to interpreting the Constitution as written is to undermine the basis of this status and challenge the legitimacy of his life's work.

CONSTITUTIONAL law is as a practical matter the product of the exercise of the power of judicial review, the power of judges, and ultimately of Supreme Court Justices, to invalidate legislation and other acts of other officials and institutions of government as inconsistent with the Constitution. The central question presented by constitutional law—the only question the great variety of matters dealt with under that rubric have in common—is how, if at all, can such a power in the hands of national officials who are unelected and effectively hold office for life be justified in a system of government supposedly republican in form and federalist in organization? The power is not explicitly provided for in the Constitution and had no precedent in English law—where Parliament, not a court, is said to be supreme—which could well be taken as reason enough to assume that no such power had been granted. Alexander Hamilton argued for the power in *Federalist 78*, however, and Chief Justice John Marshall established it in *Marbury* v. *Madison* in 1803 on the ground that it is inherent in a written constitution that declares itself to be supreme law. The argument is hardly unanswerable—other nations have written constitutions without judicial review—but judicial review limited to interpretation of the Constitution in accordance with the Framers' intent does obviate the problem of policy-making by judges.

Constitutional limitations on popular government are undoubtedly undemocratic, even if they were themselves democratically adopted by a supermajority, but the only function of judges in exercising judicial review on the basis of a written constitution with determinate meaning would be the entirely judicial one of enforcing the Constitution as they would any other law. The judges, Hamilton assured the ratifying states, would have neither "force nor will"; able to "take no active resolution whatever" in enforcing the Constitution, their power would be "next to nothing." "Judicial power," Marshall reiterated, "has no existence. Courts are mere instruments of the law, and can will nothing." The notion that a court has "power to overrule or control the action of the people's representatives," Justice Owen Roberts confirmed during the New Deal constitutional crisis, "is a misconception"; the Court's only function in a constitutional case is "to lay the article of the Constitution which is invoked beside the statute which is challenged and to decide whether the latter squares with the former."

Even Justice Brennan purports to recognize what, as he notes, Alexander Bickel called "the counter-majoritarian difficulty" presented by judicial review. "Our commitment to self-governance in a representative democracy must be reconciled," Justice Brennan concedes, "with vesting in electorally unaccountable Justices the power to invalidate the expressed desires of representative bodies on the ground of inconsistency with higher law." Supreme Court Justices, he acknowledges at the beginning of his speech, echoing Judge Learned Hand, "are not platonic guardians appointed to wield authority according to their personal moral predilections." At several points he even seems to offer the standard justification for judicial review, that the judges merely interpret the written Constitution. He states, for example, that the duty of the judge is to "draw meaning from the text" and "remain faithful to the content" of the Constitution and that "the debate is really a debate about how to read the text, about constraints on what is legitimate interpretation." These statements are consistent with the remainder of his speech, however, only if reading or interpreting a document is considered indistinguishable from composing or rewriting it.

Unfortunately, however, the debate is not about how judges should read or interpret the text of the Constitution, but about whether that is what they should in fact confine themselves to doing in deciding constitutional cases. The view that the duty of judges is to read and interpret the Constitution—to attempt to determine what the

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Framers intended to say—is precisely the view that Justice Brennan seeks to rebut and derides as uninformed and misguided. The whole point of his speech is that judges should not be confined to that task, for so to confine them would be to give them much too limited a role in our system of government and leave us insufficiently protected from the dangers of majority rule.

Justice Brennan is far from alone today in his view of the proper role of judges in exercising judicial review and of the essential irrelevance of the Constitution to constitutional law. It is, indeed, the view taken by most contemporary constitutional-law scholars, who share the political ideology of the modern-era Supreme Court and see it as their professional duty to legitimize the fruits of that ideology. Because it has become increasingly difficult—in fact, impossible—to justify the Court's controversial decisions as the result of constitutional interpretation, the bulk of modern constitutional-law scholarship consists of the invention and elaboration of "non-interpretivist" or "non-originalist" theories of judicial review—justifications for a judicial review that is not confined to constitutional interpretation in any sense that would effectively restrain judicial choice. Because the product of this review is nonetheless always called "constitutional law" and attributed in some way to the Constitution, the result is the paradox of non-interpretivist constitutional interpretation, constitutional law without the Constitution.

That more and more constitutional scholars, and now a Supreme Court Justice, should come to recognize and acknowledge that the Supreme Court's constitutional decisions of recent decades cannot be justified on any other basis—that they are not in fact based on the Constitution—can be taken as a hopeful sign. Although the effort today in an increasing flood of books, articles, and speeches is to justify those decisions nonetheless, the inevitable failure of such efforts must, it would seem, eventually cause the enterprise to be abandoned and the fact that they cannot be justified in a system of self-government to be also generally recognized and acknowledged. Justice Brennan has performed a public service by bringing this extremely important and little understood issue to greater public attention, conveniently summarizing the standard arguments for "non-interpretivist" or "non-originalist" review—i.e., what is popularly referred to as "judicial activism"—and stating his own position with unusual, even if not total, clarity and candor.

DEFENDERS of judicial activism face the dilemma that, on the one hand, judicial policy-making cannot be defended as such in our system—the Justices, even Justice Brennan must concede, are not authorized to enact their "personal moral predilections" into law and must therefore claim that their decisions derive somehow from the Constitution. On the other hand, it happens that the Constitution is most ill-suited as a basis for substantial judicial policy-making by frequent judicial intervention in the political process in the name of protecting individual rights from majority rule. The central difficulty is that although the Constitution does create some individual rights, they are actually rather few, fairly well-defined, and rarely violated. The first task of the defender of judicial activism, therefore, is to dispose of the Constitution as unhelpful, inadequate, or irrelevant to contemporary needs. Reasons must be found why the Constitution cannot be taken to mean what it rather clearly is known to mean—especially when read, as all writings must be, in historical context—or, even better, to have any determinate meaning at all.

After disposing of the Constitution by depriving it of its historic meaning, the next task of defenders of judicial activism is to imagine a much more expansive, elevated, and abstract constitution that, having no specific meaning, can be made to mean anything and serve therefore as simply a mandate for judges to enact their versions of the public good. In response to the objection that the very thinly veiled system of government by judges thus achieved is obviously inconsistent with democracy, the argument is made that the value of democracy is easily overrated and its dangers many. The "very purpose of a Constitution," as Justice Brennan states the standard argument, is to limit democracy by declaring "certain values transcendent, beyond the reach of temporary political majorities." In any event, no real inconsistency with democracy is involved, the argument concludes, because the judges, though unrestrained by the actual text of the Constitution, will continue to be restrained by its principles, the adaptation of which to changing circumstances is the true and indispensable function of judges. Justice Brennan's speech can serve as a textbook illustration of each of these moves.

Justice Brennan's attack on the notion of a constitution with a determinable historic meaning could hardly be more thorough. First of all, he finds that the Court's "sources of potential enlightenment" as to the intended meaning are often "sparse or ambiguous." Even more serious, the search for meaning is likely to be futile in any event because even the Framers, he believes, usually did not know what they meant: "Typically, all that can be gleaned is that the Framers themselves did not agree about the application or meaning of particular constitutional provisions, and hid their differences in cloaks of generality." Then there is the question of "whose intention is relevant—that of the drafters, the congressional disputants, or the ratifiers in the states?" Indeed, there is the most basic question of all, whether the very notion of intent makes sense, "whether the idea of an original intention is a coherent way of thinking about a jointly drafted document

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drawing its authority from a general assent of the states." It is almost as if the Constitution and its various provisions might have been drafted and adopted with no purpose at all. Finally, there is the problem that "our distance of two centuries cannot but work as a prism refracting all we perceive." For all these reasons, the idea that judicial review is legitimate only if faithful to the intent of the Framers can be held only by "persons who have no familiarity with the historical record."

Justice Brennan has still another, although it would seem unnecessary, nail to put in the coffin of the now demolished Constitution. Should any shred of constitutional meaning somehow survive the many obstacles he sees to finding it, he would accord it little or no value. The world of the Framers is "dead and gone," and it would not do, he believes, to hold the Constitution captive to the "anachronistic views of long-gone generations." "[A]ny static meaning" the Constitution "might have had" in that dead world must, therefore, be of dubious relevance today. In any event, "the genius of the Constitution rests," in his view, not in any such meaning but in "the adaptability of its great principles to cope with current problems and current needs," strange as it may seem that a writing can be great apart from its meaning and solely by reason of its supposed ability to mean anything.

Most of Justice Brennan's objections regarding the difficulties of constitutional interpretation have some basis, but they could also be made in regard to interpretation of almost any law. For example, one can almost always wish for a clearer or more detailed legislative history, and it is always true that legislators cannot foresee and agree on every possible application of a law. If these difficulties made the effort to determine legislative intent futile, a system of written law would hardly be possible. In any event, from the premise of an unknowable or irrelevant Constitution, the conclusion should follow that judges have no basis or justification for declaring laws unconstitutional, not that they are therefore free to invalidate laws on some other basis and still claim to be interpreting the Constitution.

Most important, whatever the difficulties of legal interpretation, they have little or no relevance to actual constitutional decision-making by the Supreme Court because no issue of interpretation, no real dispute about the intended meaning of the Constitution, is ordinarily involved. For example, the Constitution contains no provision mentioning or apparently in any way referring to the authority of the states to regulate the practice of abortion. However one might undertake to defend the Court's abortion decisions, it does not seem possible to argue that they are the result of constitutional interpretation in any non-fanciful sense. As another example, although the Constitution does mention religion, no process that could be called interpretation permits one to go from the Constitution's protection of religious freedom from federal interference to the proposition that the states may not provide for prayer in the schools.

A constitution so devoid of ascertainable meaning or contemporary relevance would seem quite useless as a guide to the solution of any contemporary problem and certainly as a written law enforceable by judges. The judges might as well be told to enforce a document written in an unknown language or, more in keeping with Justice Brennan's view, in disappearing ink. Having effectively eliminated the actual Constitution, however, Justice Brennan proceeds to remedy the loss—judicial activism cannot proceed with no constitution at all—by imagining and substituting a much more impressive, inspiring, and usefully uncertain one.

THE constitution of Justice Brennan's vision is undoubtedly a wonderful thing, one of "great" and "overarching" principles and "majestic generalities and ennobling pronouncements [that] are both luminous and obscure." It is nothing less grand than the embodiment of "the aspiration to social justice, brotherhood, and human dignity that brought this nation into being," "a sublime oration on the dignity of man," and "a sparkling vision of the supremacy of the human dignity of every individual." Justice Brennan accurately reflects current constitutional-law scholarship, here as throughout his speech, by seeing the Constitution as simply "the lodestar for our aspirations." It is a source of constant wonderment that scholars and judges of otherwise the most secular and rationalist turn of mind can grow mystical when discussing the Constitution.

The temptation is strong, of course, to dismiss Justice Brennan's rapturous statements as mere flights of poetic fancy or utopian ecstasy, obviously not meant as serious descriptions or explanations of the Constitution. The fact remains, however, that this view of the Constitution is the only justification offered by him, or other contemporary defenders of judicial activism, for the Court's assumption and exercise of enormous government power. Fanciful as it may seem, a constitution that is simply the embodiment of "our," or at least his, aspirations accurately describes the constitution he has been enforcing for nearly three decades to override the will of the people of this country on issue after issue. It cannot be too strongly emphasized, therefore, that the Constitution we actually have bears almost no relation to, and is often clearly irreconcilable with, the constitution of Justice Brennan's vision. No more is necessary to rebut all contemporary defenses of judicial activism than that a copy of the Constitution be kept close at hand to demonstrate that the defenders of judicial activism are invariably relying on something else.

Although it may come as something of a dis-

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appointment to some, an "aspiration for social justice, brotherhood, and human dignity" happens not to have been what brought this nation, or at least the government founded on the Constitution, into being. The convention to revise the Articles of Confederation was called and the Constitution was drafted and ratified not to provide additional protections for human rights—on the contrary, the stronger national government created by the Constitution was correctly seen as a potential danger to human rights—but almost entirely for commercial purposes. The primary motivating force for the creation of a stronger national government was the felt need of a central authority to remove state-imposed obstacles to interstate trade. How little the Constitution had to do with aspirations for brotherhood or human dignity is perhaps most clearly seen in its several provisions regarding slavery. It provides, for example, that a slave was to be counted as three-fifths of a free person for purposes of representation and that slaves escaping to free states were nonetheless to be returned to their masters. It is not, as Justice Brennan would explain this, that part of the "egalitarianism in America has been more pretension than realized fact," but that there was at the time the Constitution was adopted very little pretension to egalitarianism, as is illustrated by, for example, the widespread use of property qualifications for voting.

Given the original Constitution's limited and mundane purposes, it is not surprising that it provides judges with little to work with for the purpose of advancing their personal notions of social justice. The Constitution is, first of all, a very short document—easily printed, with all twenty-seven Amendments and repealed matter, on fewer than twenty pages—and apparently quite simple and straightforward, not at all like a recondite tome in which many things may be found with sufficient study. The original Constitution is almost entirely devoted to outlining the structure of the national government and setting forth the sometimes complicated methods of selection, and the responsibilities, of members of the House of Representatives, Senators, the President, and Supreme Court Justices. It contains few provisions protecting individual rights from the national government—federalism, i.e., limited national power and a high degree of local autonomy, was considered the principal protection—and even fewer restrictions on the exercise of state power. As to the national government, criminal trials are to be by jury, treason is narrowly defined, the writ of habeas corpus is protected, and bills of attainder and ex-post-facto laws are prohibited. The prohibition of bills of attainder and ex-post-facto laws is repeated as to the states, which are also prohibited from discriminating against citizens of other states. Finally and by far the most important in terms of actual challenges to state laws, the Framers, nicely illustrating their lack of egalitarian pretension, undertook to protect creditors from debtor-relief legislation by prohibiting the states from impairing contract rights.

The first eight of the first ten Amendments to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights adopted in 1791, provide additional protections of individual rights, but only against the federal government, not the states, and these, too, are fewer than seems to be generally imagined and certainly fewer than is typical of later declarations of rights, such as in the United Nations Charter. In terms of substantive rights, the First Amendment prohibits Congress from establishing or restricting the free exercise of religion—the main purpose of which was to leave matters of religion to the states—and from abridging the freedom of speech, press, or assembly. In addition, a clause of the Fifth Amendment prohibits the taking of private property without just compensation; the Second Amendment, rarely mentioned by rights enthusiasts, grants a right to bear arms; and the Third Amendment, of little apparent contemporary significance, protects against the forced quartering of troops in private homes. The Seventh Amendment, requiring jury trials in civil cases involving more than twenty dollars, is hard to see today as other than an unnecessary inconvenience. The remaining provisions (search and seizure, grand-jury indictment, double jeopardy, privilege against self-incrimination, due process, jury trial, right to counsel and to confront adverse witnesses, and cruel and unusual punishment) are related to criminal procedure.

Additional protections of individual rights are provided by the post-Civil War Amendments. The Thirteenth Amendment prohibits slavery and the Fifteenth prohibits denial of the right to vote on grounds of race. The great bulk of constitutional litigation concerns state law and nearly all of that litigation purports to be based on a single sentence of the Fourteenth Amendment and, indeed, on one or the other of two pairs of words, "due process" and "equal protection." If the Constitution is the embodiment of our aspirations, it must have become so very largely because of those four words. The clear historic purpose of the Fourteenth Amendment, however, was to provide federal protection against certain state discriminations on the basis of race, historically our uniquely intractable problem, but not otherwise to change fundamentally the constitutional scheme. Finally, the Nineteenth Amendment protects the right to vote from denial on grounds of sex, and the Twenty-seventh from denial on grounds of age for persons over eighteen.

The Constitution's protections of individual rights are not only few but also, when read in historical context, fairly clear and definite. State and federal legislators, all of whom are American citizens living in America and generally at least

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as devoted as judges to American values, have, therefore, little occasion or desire to violate the Constitution. The result is that the enactment of a clearly unconstitutional law is an extremely rare occurrence; the clearest example in our history perhaps is a 1933 Minnesota debtor-relief statute plainly prohibited by the contract clause, although, as it happens, the Supreme Court upheld it by a five-to-four decision. If judicial review were actually confined to enforcing the Constitution as written, it would be a much less potent force than the judicial review argued for and practiced by Justice Brennan.

The Constitution is undoubtedly a great document, the foundation of one of the freest and most prosperous nations in history. It does not detract from that greatness to point out that it is not, however, what Justice Brennan would make of it, a compendium of majestic generalities and ennobling pronouncements luminous and obscure; indeed, its greatness and durability surely derive in large part from the fact that the Framers' aims were much more specific and limited. Far from intending to compose an oration to human dignity, the Framers would have considered that they had failed in their effort to specify and limit the power of the national government if the effect of the Constitution should be to transfer the focus of human-rights concerns from the state to the national level. The Framers' solution to the problem of protecting human freedom and dignity was to preserve as much as possible, consistent with national commerce and defense requirements, a system of decentralized democratic decision-making, with the regulation of social conditions and personal relations left to the states. Justice Brennan's solution, virtually unlimited Supreme Court power to decide basic social issues for the nation as a whole, effectively disenfranchising the people of each state as to those issues, is directly contrary to the constitutional scheme.

Judicial review on the basis of a constitution divorced from historical meaning and viewed, instead, as simply "the lodestar for our aspirations" is obviously a prescription for policy-making by judges. It should therefore be defended, if at all, as such, free of obfuscating references to "interpretation" of the Constitution. The only real question it presents is, why should the American people prefer to have important social-policy issues decided for the whole nation by the Supreme Court—a committee of nine lawyers unelected to and essentially unremovable from office—rather than by the decentralized democratic process? Justic Brennan's answer to this question is, in essence, why not? The argument that judicial interpretation of the Constitution in accordance with the Framers' intent is essential for "depoliticization of the judiciary," he points out, has its own "political underpinnings"; it "in effect establishes a presumption of resolving textual ambiguities against the claim of constitutional right," which involves "a choice no less political than any other."

Justice Brennan is certainly correct that the presumption of constitutionality accorded to challenged acts of government officials has a political basis, but it is surprising that he should find "far from clear what justifies such a presumption." What justifies it is the basic premise of democratic government that public-policy issues are ordinarily to be decided through the electoral process, not by unelected judges; that constitutional restrictions on representative government—even if, unlike judge-made restrictions, they were once democratically adopted—are the exception, not the rule. To refuse to assume the validity of the acts of the electorally responsible officials and institutions of government is to refuse to assume the validity of representative self-government. It has, therefore, from the beginning been considered the bedrock of constitutional litigation that one who would have a court invalidate an act of the political branches must assume the burden of showing its inconsistency with the Constitution, ordinarily a most difficult task. By reversing the presumption of constitutionality, Justice Brennan would simply reject political decision-making as the norm and require elected representatives to justify their policy choices to the satisfaction of Supreme Court Justices, presumably by showing that those choices contribute to the Justices' notion of social progress.

Justice Brennan would justify the judicial supremacy he favors on the not entirely consistent grounds that, on the one hand, the Justices are the true voice of the people and, on the other, that the people are in any event not always to be trusted. "When Justices interpret the Constitution," Justice Brennan assures us, "they speak for their community, not for themselves alone" and "with full consciousness that it is, in a very real sense, the community's interpretation that is sought." Apart from the fact that no question of constitutional interpretation is in fact involved in most "constitutional" cases—the judges do not really decide cases by studying the words "due process" or "equal protection"—the community is, of course, fully capable of speaking for itself through the representatives it elects and maintains in office for that purpose. Justice Brennan does not explain why he thinks the community needs or wants unelected judges to speak for it instead or why the judges can be expected better to reflect or express the community's views.

The actual effect of most judicial rulings of unconstitutionality is, of course, not to implement, but to frustrate the community's views. For example, Justice Brennan would disallow capital punishment as constitutionally prohibited despite not only the fact that it is repeatedly provided for in the Constitution, but also the fact that it is favored by a large majority of the American

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people. In some cases, however, he explains, a Justice may perceive the community's "interpretation of the text to have departed so far from its essential meaning" that he "is bound, by a larger constitutional duty to the community, to expose the departure and point toward a different path." On capital punishment, Justice Brennan hopes to "embody a community striving for human dignity for all, although perhaps not yet arrived." Interpreting an aspirational constitution apparently requires prescience as well as a high degree of self-confidence.

THE foundation of all defenses of judicial activism, however, is not any fanciful notion that the judges are the true voice of the people, but on the contrary, the conviction that the people, and their elected representatives, should not be permitted to have the last word. Rarely has this conviction, common among our intellectual elite, been expressed with more certainty than in Justice Brennan's speech. Judicial acceptance of the "predominant contemporary authority of the elected branches of government" must be rejected, he argues, for the same reason he rejects judicial acceptance of the "transcendent historical authority of the Framers." That reason, it now appears, is not so much that original intent is unknowable or irrelevant as that its acceptance as authoritative would be inconsistent with his notion of "proper judicial interpretation" of the Constitution because it would leave judges with too little to do. "Faith in the majoritarian process," like fidelity to original intent, is objectionable, he is frank to admit, simply because it "counsels restraint." It would, he points out, lead the Court generally to "stay its hand" where "invalidation of a legislature's substantive policy choice" is involved. Justice Brennan's confidence that his university audience shared his suspicion of democracy and distrust of his fellow citizens was such as to put beyond need of argument the unacceptability of a counsel of restraint by Supreme Court Justices in deciding basic issues of social policy.

Legislative supremacy in policy-making is derided by Justice Brennan as the "unabashed enshrinement of majority will." "Faith in democracy is one thing," he warns, but "blind faith quite another." "The view that all matters of substantive policy should be resolved through the majoritarian process has appeal," he concedes, but only "under some circumstances," and even as so qualified "it ultimately will not do." It will not do because the majority is simply not to be trusted: to accept the mere approval of "a majority of the legislative body, fairly elected," as dispositive of public-policy issues would be to "permit the imposition of a social-caste system or wholesale confiscation of property," a situation "our Constitution could not abide." How a people so bereft of good sense, toleration, and foresight as to adopt such policies could have adopted the Constitution in the first place is not explained. Justice Brennan seems to forget that if the Constitution prohibits such things—indeed, if it is an oration to human dignity, as he maintains—it must be because the American people have made it so and therefore, it would seem, can be trusted. It cannot be Justice Brennan's position that political wisdom died with the Framers and that we are therefore fortunate to have their policy judgments to restrain us; he rejects those judgments as unknowable or irrelevant. Like other defenders of judicial activism, however, he seems to view the Constitution not as an actual document produced by actual people but as a metaphysical entity from an extraterrestrial source of greater authority than the mere wishes of a majority of the American people, which source, fortunately, is in effective communication with Supreme Court Justices.

The social-caste system feared by Justice Brennan would probably be prohibited by the post-Civil War Amendments, without undue stretching, and confiscation of property by the national government—though not by the states—would be prohibited by the just-compensation clause of the Fifth Amendment. (These constitutional provisions, it may be noted in passing, would operate as impediments to such policies, providing grounds for opposing arguments, even if they were not judicially enforceable.) The real protection against such fears, however—and columnist Anthony Lewis's similar fear that without activist judicial review Oregon might establish the Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church as the official state religion—is simply the good sense of the American people. No extraordinary degree of confidence in that good sense is necessary in order to believe that these and similarly outrageous policies that are invariably offered as providing an unanswerable justification for judicial activism are so unlikely to be adopted as not to be a matter of serious concern. If they should be a matter of concern nonetheless—if, for example, it is truly feared that the people of some state might establish a church and believed that no state should be free to do so—the appropriate response would be the adoption of a constitutional amendment further limiting self-government in the relevant respects. To grant judges an unlimited power to rewrite the Constitution, Justice Brennan's recommended response, would be to avoid largely imaginary dangers of democratic misgovernment by creating a certainty of judicial misgovernment.

JUDICIAL activism is not necessary to protect us from state-established churches, favored by almost no one, but it does operate to deprive the people of each state of the right to decide for themselves such real issues as whether provision should be made for prayer in the public schools. In any event, the issue presented by contemporary judicial activism is not whether major-

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ity rule is entirely trustworthy—all government power is obviously dangerous—or even whether certain specific constitutional limitations on majority rule might not be justifiable; the issue is whether freewheeling policy-making by Supreme Court Justices, totally centralized and undemocratic, is more trustworthy than majority rule.

Defenders of judicial activism invariably match their skepticism about democratic policy-making with a firm belief in the possibility and desirability of policy-making on the basis of principle. To free judicial review from the constraint of a constitution with a determinate meaning is not to permit unrestrained judicial policy-making in constitutional cases, it is argued, for the judges will continue to be constrained by the Constitution's principles, which, like the smile of the Cheshire cat, somehow survive the disappearance of the Constitution's text. According to this argument, judicial activism amounts to nothing more than the adaptation and application of these basic principles to changing circumstances, a necessary task if the Constitution is to remain a "living document" and a contributor rather than an obstacle to the national welfare. Thus, judicial activism is necessary in Justice Brennan's view, as already noted, if we are not to "turn a blind eye to social progress and eschew adaptation of overarching principles to changes of social circumstance" and because the genius of the Constitution rests not in what, if anything, the Framers actually intended to provide, but in the "adaptability of its great principles to cope with current problems and current needs."

The argument that judges are constrained by constitutional principles, even though not by the constitutional text, bears no relation to reality. In the first place, it is not possible to formulate useful constitutional principles apart from or beyond the Constitution's actual provisions. The Constitution protects certain interests to a certain extent, from which fact the only principle to be derived is that the Constitution does just that. An even more basic fallacy is the argument's assumption that the solution of social problems lies in the discovery, adaptation, and application of preexisting principles to new situations. Difficult problems of social choice arise, however, not because of some failure to discern or adapt an applicable principle, but only because we have many principles, many interests we regard as legitimate, and they inevitably come into conflict. Some interests have to be sacrificed or compromised if other interests are to be protected—for example, public demonstrations will have to be regulated at some point in the interest of maintaining public order—and there is no authoritatively established principle, rule, or generality that resolves the conflict. If there were such a principle, the conflict would not present a serious problem, but would be a matter that has already been decided or that anyone can decide who can read and reason. Value judgments have to be made to solve real policy issues, and the meaning of self-government is that they are to be made in accordance with the collective judgment of those who will have to live with the results.

There is also very little basis for Justice Brennan's apparent belief that judicial review confined to the Constitution as written would somehow be incompatible with social progress—unless social progress is simply defined as the enactment of his views. The Constitution does contain several provisions that we would probably be better off without, for example, the Seventh Amendment's requirement of a jury trial in federal civil cases involving more than twenty dollars and the Twenty-second Amendment's limitation of Presidents to two terms. Apart from the fact, however, that the Constitution, of course, provides procedures for its amendment—it can be updated if necessary without the Court's help—judicial activism has not generally served to alleviate the undesirable effects of such provisions. In any event, the Constitution's restrictions on self-government are, as already noted, relatively few and rarely such as a legislature might seek to avoid. Rarely if ever will adaptation of the Constitution's overarching principles, if any, be necessary in order to permit a legislature to implement its views of social progress.

Indeed, on the basis of our actual constitutional history—which includes the Supreme Court's disastrous decision that Congress could not prohibit the extension of slavery and, after the Civil War that decision helped bring on, the decision that Congress could not prohibit racial segregation in public places—it is possible to believe that social progress might go more smoothly without the Court's supposed adaptations of principles. If the Constitution can be said to have an overarching principle, the principle of federalism, of decision-making on most social-policy issues at the state level, is surely the best candidate, and that principle is not adapted or updated but violated by the Court's assertion of power to decide such issues. Far from keeping the Constitution a "living document," judicial activism threatens its demise.

WHATEVER merit Justice Brennan's justifications for judicial activism might have in theory, they do not seem relevant to the judicial activism actually practiced by the Supreme Court for the past three decades. It would be very difficult to justify the Court's major constitutional decisions during this period, and particularly its most controversial decisions, on any of the grounds Justice Brennan suggests. It would not seem possible to argue, for example, that the Justices spoke for the community, not for themselves, in reaching their decisions on abortion, busing, criminal procedure, and prayer in the schools. Nor does it seem that any of those decisions can be justified as providing a needed pro-

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tection from a possible excess of democracy, as merely delaying effectuation of the aberrational enthusiasms of "temporary political majorities" until they could return to their senses. Judicial review may, as Chief Justice Harlan Fiske Stone put this standard rationalization, provide the people with an opportunity for a "sober second thought," but no amount of thought or experience is likely to change the view of the vast majority of the American people that, for example, their children should not be excluded from their neighborhood public schools because of their race or that no new protections of the criminally accused should be invented with the effect of preventing the conviction and punishment of the clearly guilty.

Finally, the contribution of most of the Court's constitutional decisions of recent decades to social progress—for example, its decision that California may not prohibit the parading of vulgarity in its courthouses or that Oklahoma may not impose a higher minimum drinking age on men than on women—is at best debatable. Very few of these decisions, it seems, could be used to illustrate the adaptation of overarching constitutional principles or transcendent constitutional values to changing circumstances. They could probably more easily be used to illustrate that, rather than helping us to cope with current problems and current needs, the Court's constitutional decisions have often been the cause of those problems and needs.

Whatever the merits of the Supreme Court's constitutional decisions of the past three decades, they have as to the issues decided deprived us of perhaps the most essential element of the human dignity Justice Brennan is concerned to protect, the right of self-government, which necessarily includes the right to make what others might consider mistakes. It is not the critics of judicial activism but the activist judges who can more properly be charged with being doctrinaire and arrogant, for it is they who presume to know the answers to difficult questions of social policy and to believe that they provide a needed protection from government by the misguided or ignorant. An opponent of judicial activism need not claim to know the answer to so difficult a question of social policy as, say, the extent, if any, to which abortion should be restricted to know that it is shameful in a supposedly democratic country that such a question should be answered for all of us by unelected and unaccountable government officials who have no special competence to do so.

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Liberalism and Zionism

Edward Alexander

"LIBERALISM is always being surprised." That was how Lionel Trilling used to describe the characteristic liberal failure to imagine what reason and seductive common sense appeared to gainsay. During the past century, few things have surprised and offended the liberal imagination more than the weird persistence of the Jewish nation.

Liberal friends of the Jews expected that their emancipation would put an end to Jewish collective existence. Count Stanislas de Clermont-Tonnerre, the French revolutionary, told the French National Assembly in 1789 that "the Jews should be denied everything as a nation, but granted everything as individuals." Wilhelm von Humboldt, the great liberal reformer of Prussia, whose ethical idealism is celebrated in John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty,* considered the disappearance of the Jews as a distinct group a condition for taking up the cause of their emancipation.

When the Jews failed to live up to their sponsors' expectations, the reaction against them could be fierce. George Eliot wrote in 1878 that modern English resentment of Jews for maintaining themselves in moral isolation from their fellow citizens was strongest among "liberal gentlemen" who "usually belong to a party which has felt itself glorified in winning for Jews . . . the full privileges of citizenship." George Eliot had herself once belonged to that party, and in 1848, when her revolutionary ardor was at its height, predicted that the Jews as a "race" were "plainly destined to extermination." But between 1848 and 1874, when she began to write *Daniel Deronda,* her liberalism had been tempered by a wider experience of mankind and a deeper reflection on the meaning of nationality in general and of the organized memory of Jewish national consciousness in particular.

George Eliot came to cherish the idea of "restoration of a Jewish State planted on the old ground," not only because it would afford the Jews a center of national feeling and a source of dignifying protection, but because it would contribute to the councils of the world "an added form of national genius," and one of transcendent (though not Christian) meaning. At the conclusion of her essay on the Jewish problem ("The Modern HEP! HEP! HEP!"), she pleads with John Stuart Mill's liberal disciples to enlarge their master's ideal of individuality to nations: "A modern book on Liberty has maintained that from the freedom of individual men to persist in idiosyncrasies the world may be enriched. Why should we not apply this argument to the idiosyncrasy of a nation, and pause in our haste to hoot it down?"

The relation among liberalism, democracy, and the Jewish nation is directly addressed in two ambitious new books by liberals on Zionism and Israel. In one of these, Bernard Avishai, author of *The Tragedy of Zionism** and self-styled elegist of Zionism, has cast himself in the role of Epimenides coming to Athens or Plato to Syracuse, sternly ignoring the contemptible traditional and local idiosyncrasies of the natives in order to bestow upon them the blessings of the "British liberal tradition," "secular democracy," "liberal decency," and "a written constitution."

In his prologue Avishai describes how, in 1972, he and his wife left Canada to become Israelis. But by 1973 they began to feel that they were victims of "cultural enslavement" whose "English spirit" was being blotted out by Hebrew. The instrument of their deconversion from Zionism was American and English television programs which revealed to them that they were "living among foreigners" and that their true home, to which they soon returned, was Canada and the English language. Although he momentarily blamed himself for failing to become an Israeli, Avishai quickly decided that the blame lay with Israel, which, if you are American, turns your children into strangers, and with Zionism, which, "like old *halakhic* [Jewish legal] norms," represses "individual life . . . equivocation, sexuality," desiderata of the "culture of liberalism" that he now pursues as a teacher of writing at MIT.

Five pages after describing how he saved himself from the clearest and most dangerous siren

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* Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 389 pp., $19.95.

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call he had ever heard, Avishai announces that it is time "to retire" Zionism in favor of democracy. Ten pages later he contemptuously describes early political Zionists such as Leo Pinsker, Theodor Herzl, and Vladimir Jabotinsky as people who invented an ideology to assuage "personal disappointment," for they "were themselves people who had tried to assimilate and . . . failed." The ironic vision of this tragedian-elegist does not extend to himself.

Conor Cruise O'Brien also begins his massive study of Israel and Zionism, *The Siege*,* by describing those elements in his national, religious, and family background that drew him to the subject. In the late 1950's that most unphilosophical principle called the alphabet conspired with destiny to situate O'Brien, as Ireland's UN representative, between Iraq and Israel, a revealing perspective for a shrewd observer. In 1961 he left Ireland's foreign service but subsequently went into politics at home, where he served four years in opposition and four years as a member of the Irish government.

O'Brien is a liberal, but it was not his liberalism that made him see the Return to Zion, which took place under "harsher necessities" than any ever imagined by liberals, as "the greatest story of modern times." As an Irish Catholic he had no trouble recognizing, at the heart of Zionism, a powerful bond between religion and nationality. As the child of a lapsed or "enlightened" Catholic father, whom he labels a *maskil* (Hebrew for "enlightened one"), O'Brien grew up sufficiently "alienated" from Catholic society to feel yet another link with Jews living as strangers in Exile. Finally, he was moved by the conviction that "Irish Catholics . . . have had a greater experience of persecution, oppression, and stigmatization than any other people in Western Europe *except* the Jews."

Throughout his book, O'Brien freely and candidly uses his experience as an Irishman and a diplomat to shed coruscating light on the story of the Zionist movement as well as on the play of forces around that movement. This means that in his view of the British Mandatory government that ruled Palestine from soon after the end of World War I until 1948, the British Anglo-Saxon constitutional system, which to Avishai is a second (and superior) revelation from Sinai, sometimes appears to be just what Matthew Arnold called it: "A colossal machine for the manufacture of Philistines." O'Brien remarks that among such Philistines, "anti-Semitism is a light sleeper," and offers as an instance the use in British official circles, starting in 1941, of the epithet "Jewish Nazi state." For Avishai, anti-Semitic remarks by the British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin are "tactlessness," something akin to eating soup with a fork.†

O'Brien's saga of Israel and Zionism is in two parts. The first recounts the story of Zionism from the assassination of Czar Alexander II in 1881 through the expiration of the British Mandate in 1948 and includes detailed analyses of the whole spectrum of Zionist ideologies, portraits of such central actors as Herzl, Chaim Weizmann, David Ben-Gurion, and Jabotinsky, and accounts of the Dreyfus Affair, Eastern European pogroms, and British motives and actions in Palestine. The second, longer part tells the story of Israel from its bloody beginning through the completion of the withdrawal from Lebanon in summer 1985. It comprises lengthy chapters on the inner life of Israel as expressed in its literature, on Israel's Oriental Jewish population, on the Arabs of Israel and the administered territories, and on the complex relations between international diplomacy and Israel's wars. *The Siege* is the work of a writer of flexible intelligence and boundless curiosity. The book therefore has a kind of noble imperfection, like that of large Victorian novels lovingly called loose and baggy monsters.

Avishai's "tragedy," by contrast, has the completeness of a limited mind. The first part of the book analyzes the development of Zionist ideas, especially in relation to certain crossroads in the development of the *yishuv* (Palestinian Jewish community) and with favorable emphasis upon cultural, as opposed to political, Zionism. The second part traces, in just three chapters, the rapid disintegration of Labor Zionism from its victory at the 1931 World Zionist Congress to "the end of Zionism" on the eve of the Six-Day War of 1967. The last, most aggressively polemical section of the book presents what Avishai sees as the various tragedies and failures, from 1967 to the present, that resulted from Ben-Gurion's "post-Zionist matrix" of "power, Bible, defiance, settlement, economic growth."

Avishai's is a much narrower book than O'Brien's in scope because it tells comparatively little of what the Gentiles, apart from Palestinian Arabs, are thinking and doing. His description of the 1938 Evian conference on Jewish refugees, for example, includes a polite, passing allusion to the failure of the Western democracies to accept Jews, followed by a detailed, acerbic description of Labor Zionist hopes that the conference would fail. This is also a narrower book in its quality of mind. O'Brien's discussion of Israeli literature ranges widely from Abba Kovner, Aharon Appelfeld, David Shahar, and Yehuda Amichai to Amos

* Simon and Schuster, 800 pp., $24.95.

† Avishai is equally charitable toward the constitutional democracies of the U.S. and Canada, which, he says, closed their doors to mass immigration "in the depths of economic depression." In fact, those doors were closed in the boom years of the 20's. Irving Abella and Harold Troper (*None Is Too Many*) have demonstrated that Canada's distinction of admitting fewer Jewish refugees from Hitler than any other Western country had nothing to do with economics, everything to do with that "tactlessness" called anti-Semitism.

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Oz and A. B. Yehoshua. Avishai's is limited to books and plays that illustrate "the liberal, post-Zionist curve of Israel's leading writers," especially if these "leading writers" deal with an Arab-Jewish love affair or depict Israelis as Nazis.

Both books are unusually personal and enlivened by anecdote. O'Brien's invocations of experience often reveal the hypocrisy or hatred that is part of the burden Israel must bear. Recalling how in 1974 the UN delegates of every Western European nation, including Ireland, joined in the standing ovation for Yasir Arafat, O'Brien writes: "I asked our Foreign Minister, Garrett FitzGerald, whether it was altogether wise for Ireland to be so fulsome about the PLO: might there not be a precedent in relation to the IRA? Garret thought not. . . . Arafat and his Fatah were the moderates." On another occasion, as Ireland's representative at the 1946 conference on refugees in Geneva, O'Brien had to meet with a Monsignor representing the Vatican who frankly told his interlocutor of his feelings about Jews: "I'm not anti-Semitic. I just hate them."

Avishai's anecdotes, by contrast, serve mainly to cast a warm glow over his debating skills marshaled in combat against illiberal, supposedly paranoiac Jews. In Israel, he vanquished a taxi driver whose experiences in Lebanon had embittered him toward Palestinian Arabs. In North America, he joined an Israeli in heaping scorn upon Diaspora Jews who still brood over the Holocaust and "now need to invent anti-Semites to feel like Jews, to perform the commandment of Auschwitz." (It is characteristic of Avishai to suppose that the power exercised over ordinary Jews by this commandment—as Emil Fackenheim phrases it—not to give Hitler posthumous victories is merely that of a smart syllogism, on the order of "since Hitler didn't want Jews in Germany, we must live there.")

THE stark contrast in method, tenor, and tone between the two books is everywhere apparent. For O'Brien the Jews, for all their political inaptitude, are a great people, and the state of Israel, despite its "Panglossian" professors, its proud, overweening politicians, and a national character "so democratic as to be almost unworkable," is the culmination of a movement whose power over Gentiles as well as Jews is a "mystery" that cannot be explained except by the divine power of the Bible. For Avishai, full of acrid contempt for those who sense "something mysterious and wonderful about Jewish history," the Jews are a small people, but a nasty one. Their country has become the devil's own experiment station, where the state is "superior to all other moral values," where young people increasingly succumb to their primordial instincts for "domination, lockstep, revenge," and where the Bible impedes peace by deluding "new" Zionists into calling the West Bank Judea and Samaria (always enclosed by the author in quotation marks) and impedes "liberal democracy" by imposing upon Hebrew speakers an archaic vocabulary in which the word for freedom *(cherut)* is national rather than individual in meaning.

O'Brien expresses admiration for the heroism of the outnumbered Jewish defenders of the early settlements of Yad Mordechai, Degania (helpfully identified, by Avishai, by its Arab name Umm Juni), and Geulim. Citing several sources, he writes that in the War of Independence, "the numbers actually engaged on the two sides seem to have been about equal. But the Arabs had a huge initial superiority in . . . equipment and firepower, heavy weapons, armor and aircraft." Avishai, judging the paltry efforts of the Jews by the high and severe conceptions of gallantry that obtain at MIT, is unimpressed. He writes, citing no sources at all, that "Jewish forces outnumbered the combined strength of the Arab forces and Palestinian irregulars by 2 to 1—a fact which should dispel misty notions about how courage alone vanquished the Arab Goliath."*

In both books the large immigration to Israel in the 1950's of Oriental Jews, strangers to democracy, receives detailed attention. O'Brien describes the lives these people had led as second-class citizens in their lands of origin, where they were held in contempt by the aggressive "triumphalist creed" of Islam. He argues persuasively that they were something more than a mixed multitude, incapable of appreciating the socialism and atheism of Israel's founders. Rather, they were Zionists, from "national traditions kept alive through religious observance."

For Avishai, the Oriental Jews were not merely, like many of the children of Labor Zionist veterans, not Zionists—they were also destitute of liberalism, hence poor material for secular democracy. It was in order to mobilize such a rabble, he argues, that Ben-Gurion had to sacrifice the revolutionary ideas of Labor Zionism in favor of statism and militarism, and diplomacy in favor of retaliation. Their best people, i.e., their "liberal intelligentsia," having gone to Montreal or New York rather than Israel, the Oriental Jews were deaf to the blandishments of socialism and democracy. They had come to Israel because of their "vivid understanding of the modern world's tribal and dark side."

No hint is given by Avishai of what is abundantly provided by O'Brien: namely, evidence that Oriental immigrants responded to this "chance to be strong against the Arabs" not from some metaphysical glimpse into the modern heart of darkness but from living among them. Explicitly, Avishai bewails the fact that so few Yemenite cobblers and North African policemen

* According to the American military historian Trevor Dupuy, the Arabs committed 40,000 men to the conflict, the Jews had 30,000 men under arms, 10,000 more ready for mobilization.

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have learned the true, "European" meanings of democracy and freedom at Hebrew University; implicitly, what bothers him is that so many have learned about Arabs from experience and not from, say, one or another of the country's institutes of Middle East studies, where they could receive instruction in how to hallucinate moderation in their enemies.

Ascribing moderation to Israel's enemies and willful extremism to Israel's leaders is characteristic of Avishai's approach. (There are assorted "tragedies" scattered through his account of Zionism, starting with the establishment by the Histadrut [General Federation of Jewish Workers] of a "dictatorship of the proletariat." But the underlying meaning of the title is that the protagonist, Zionism, has brought about its own destruction by *hamartia*, or arrogant pride.) He describes King Feisal of Iraq in 1919 "offer[ing] protection for Zionism under a united Arab state." O'Brien points out that the real intent of this offer was, as even the British Royal Commission Report of 1937 confirmed, that "If King Hussein and Emir Feisal secured their big Arab state, they would concede little Palestine to the Jews." The agreement, wrote the British intelligence officer Colonel French at the time of its signing, "is not worth the paper it is written on."

Avishai depicts the present King Hussein of Jordan intrepidly (if vainly) arguing for recognition of Israel at the Khartoum conference of Arab nations following the Six-Day War. But how, asks Avishai, could he dream of making peace without getting back Jerusalem? We are not told why Hussein showed no interest in peace or recognition between 1953, when he came to the throne, and 1967, when he led his country into war against Israel. In any event, the ascendant political figure in Israel by this time was Moshe Dayan, who, allegedly, made any settlement impossible.

For Avishai, Dayan is "a modern pharaoh" who virtually created Palestinian Arab "radicalism." So fond is Avishai of this conceit whereby Arabs become Jews and Israelis their Gentile oppressors that he tells how Dayan's heart, presumably like Pharaoh's in the Bible, "had been hardened by terrorist attacks such as the one [on a school] at Ma'alot." This is to say that Arafat does not murder but only executes divine sentence. Avishai claims that "in 1968, Arafat was still an unlikely guerrilla, criss-crossing the West Bank on a motorcycle. . . ." O'Brien, however, reminds us that in March 1968, at Karameh, this pathetically enterprising cyclist, in league with a Hussein who now called himself a *fedayeen* (commando), murdered 23 Israeli soldiers.

Avishai indignantly reports that in 1976 only the dovish Israeli politician Yossi Sarid recognized that the newly elected pro-PLO mayors of the West Bank, graciously willing to set up a state "in whatever part of the homeland would be liberated," represented "a new opportunity for Israeli diplomacy." O'Brien, on the other hand, quotes "moderate" Palestinian Arabs who unblushingly declared that "the step that follows liberation is the dismantling of the racist . . . structure of Israel as a state." He offers too the sobering reminder that the organizers of the massacre of Israeli schoolchildren at Ma'alot "were well-known Palestinian 'moderates' who had been in dialogue with Israeli 'doves.' "

Avishai's generosity toward Israel's adversaries is epistemological as well as political. He sneers at the argument of Revisionist Zionists that most Palestinian Arabs were as much immigrants to the country as most Jews were. He does not deny the fact, but maintains that Arabs who moved to Palestine from Damascus or Amman were, "in their own eyes, . . . doing no more than moving from one part of the Arab homeland to another." How such people could consistently also claim, after 1948, to be homeless refugees if they lived anywhere outside the borders of Israel is not a question to interest Avishai, though he castigates Labor Zionists for causing the displacement of Arab residents "from their country." Later he refers gingerly to Joan Peters's "highly controversial book" about Arab immigration to Palestine, *From Time Immemorial*, promising that a friend of his will soon explode Peters's thesis. But in the meantime we must rest content with the view that "the number of Arabs who came, and their actual place of origin, beg the question of the subjective feelings of the people who came to call themselves Palestinians." In other words, it does not much matter what things are in themselves, only what they appear to be to Arabs.

O'Brien points out that, among the "subjective feelings" of Israel's Arab adversaries, belief in Enlightenment principles of secular democracy barely exists. Nevertheless, it is in this language that they have chosen to make their case to the West, knowing that it will be music to the inward ear of liberals. "In terms of the governing code of debate, based on the Western Enlightenment value system, this puts the Arab states—and the cause of Government by Consent—permanently in the right, and Israel—with its archaic Right of Return and Jewish State—permanently in the wrong." Of course, O'Brien adds, Muslim spokesmen who appeal to Enlightenment principles "are engaging in doubletalk, masking the realities of what is fundamentally, on both sides, a religious-nationalist culture conflict." He notes that the terrorist group Fatah, whose spokesmen repeat "secular democratic state" with the regularity of a steam engine, is an organization whose name means the opening of a country for conquest by Islam.

The archetype of the relation of Palestinian Arabs to democracy is, for O'Brien, their outright rejection of the Palestine Constitution proposed

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by Palestine High Commissioner Herbert Samuel and then-Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill in 1922. Although Weizmann accepted this commitment to representative democracy, the Arab majority scorned an arrangement that did not abolish the Balfour Declaration and bestow on the Arabs the power to exclude Jews from Palestine. Then as now only "the prestige of the absolute" could enrapture Palestinian Arabs.

For both writers the nature of democracy in Israel is bound up with religion; beyond that point they diverge in every particular. In the first part of his book Avishai insists, often to the point of absurdity, on denying Jewish religion any role in the development of Zionism; but his account of events after 1948 alleges that religious influence poisoned Zionism, prevented territorial concession, and maimed by compression, like a Chinese lady's foot, every libertarian impulse of Israeli citizens. On the very first page of his "tragedy," Avishai states that Czar Nicholas I "had been dismayed by Jewish sympathies for Napoleon's occupation."

The statement is typical Avishai for two reasons. First, it is wrong. Nicholas, not famous for his love of Jews, wrote of them in his diary: "Surprisingly . . . in 1812 they were very loyal to us and assisted us in every possible way even at the risk of their own lives." Secondly, it is wrong because Avishai cannot admit that, given the choice, many Jews preferred their traditional religious observance under a tyrant to emancipation under the aegis of French Enlightenment.

Avishai's account of the origins of Zionism is diametrically opposed to that of O'Brien, who insists that Jewish nationalism drew its ultimate strength from the Jewish religion and that even Ben-Gurion and Weizmann were, and could not but be, essentially religious Jews. Avishai never even mentions such early religious Zionists as Yehuda Alkalay and the widely read Zvi Hirsch Kalischer; declares that the *Eretz Yisrael* of religious Jews "corresponded to no actual territory," even though Weizmann had somehow got the impression that Jews who in the East End of London prayed for dew in the summer and rain in the winter were attached to Palestine (and not Atlantis); and reports (falsely) that all religious Zionists at the Zionist congresses supported Herzl's scheme for emergency settlement of Jews in Uganda.

Avishai lashes Ben-Gurion and Golda Meir for not entering into a *Kulturkampf* against religious forces. He depicts Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, who as chief rabbi of Jaffa from 1904 held out a welcoming hand to Labor Zionism, as a parasite, but reserves his harshest epithets for the new, religious Zionists who do work the land. Although Avishai's single reference to Jewish daily prayers—"the daily prayers stated that Jews had been exiled 'for their sins' "—indicates he has not said them for a long time, he is filled with a visceral loathing for those who do, which reminds one that the French Enlightenment whose child he is was not only liberal and secular, it was also anti-Semitic. "Scripture hawks," "ultra-nationalist settlers," "fringe romantics": these people have, in Avishai's view, lost their human status.

The relatively small number of religious Jews in the fledgling state and the much larger number of citizens for whom religious symbols had become, through the agency of the state, a kind of civil religion, kept Israel from becoming a secular, democratic state in two ways, according to Avishai. First, they made it impossible to promulgate a comprehensive bill of rights and constitution, and thus enabled the discriminatory Law of Return, which grants citizenship to all Jews who request it, to be passed and maintained. In the long list of liberal nostrums prescribed by Avishai for the de-Judaization of Israel, abolition of the Law of Return has a high place. He is not, however, a dogmatic egalitarian. He does not want Arabs to be bothered with that little matter of serving in the army from eighteen to fifty-five, and he does not object to the principle of "affirmative action" as such: in fact, he recommends it—for the Arabs. Secondly, the religious and their allies stand accused of fostering an atmosphere of intolerance, especially in Israeli schools, that permeates all aspects of society.* His complaint that "Israeli schools have taught children much more about the tribes of Israel than about the Enlightenment" will elicit a bitter laugh from people whose children have actually attended these schools, the kind of laugh invited by one who cries fire in the midst of a flood.

In his epilogue to *The Siege,* O'Brien argues cogently against exchanging the territories of Judea and Samaria for an illusory peace. This notion, he implies, can be espoused only by well-intentioned fools or ill-intentioned rogues. By a strange irony, O'Brien adds, "Those in the West who urge that the effort to rule over large numbers of Arabs may eventually destroy Israel itself might do well to note that Meir Kahane is making the same point, while drawing from it an inference radically different from what the Western critics have in mind."

Avishai, who favors yet another partitioning of Palestine ("the only democratic solution"), is not exactly making "the same point" as Kahane, yet there is an uncanny resemblance between the mental worlds they inhabit. In both, the opposition between Zionism and democracy is inevitable and Manichean. In both, the "problem" of marriage between Jew and Arab is obsessive. Kahane

* For his information on the "anti-democratic views" of Israeli high-school students Avishai relies on the tendentious polls conducted by Jerusalem's Van Leer Institute. The biased, unreliable character of these surveys has been analyzed by Shlomo Sharan of Tel Aviv University. See *Ma'ariv,* International Edition, September 27, 1985.

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wants to outlaw it, and Avishai, speaking for those few Israelis who combine the liberal craving for forbidden fruit with the liberal craving for legality, wants Israel to institute civil marriage.

In flagellating Israel with half-understood, misapplied, and uniquely inappropriate slogans about the "tyranny of the majority" that he has gleaned from Tocqueville and Mill while demanding that Israel surrender its Jewish character, Avishai shows a poor grasp not just of his liberal sources but of something far more important. John Stuart Mill once wrote that in the makeup of every state there must be *"something* which is settled, something permanent, and not to be called in question: something which, by general agreement, has a right to be where it is, and to be secure against disturbance."

In the state of the Jews, a state (as O'Brien keeps stressing) under siege and likely long to remain so, that "something" can only be Jewish religion and not liberalism—not necessarily the Judaism of the Orthodox parties but a Judaism freely and variously interpreted and always including the conviction that Jewish life leads somewhere because it began somewhere. This religion may not suit the most refined tastes, and some of its devotees may be raw and blind in their gropings. But men live and, if need be, die for values, not for procedures; for beliefs, not for conclusions. Early Labor Zionists seemed to do very well without religion because, as O'Brien recognizes, they were sustained by the very Judaism they denied. The same was not true for their children and grandchildren, for whom no traditional faith existed that could endow gestures of rebellion with meaning.

It is a gloomy thought that the enemies of Israel neither slumber nor sleep. But there is comfort, too, in remembering that the first elegist to crow over the demise of Zion was a fellow named Merneptah, a ruler of Egypt who announced that "Israel is desolated; its seed is no more." That was in the year 1215 B.C.E.

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The Lost Honor of Geraldine Ferraro

James Ring Adams

IN THE American television film *The Lost Honor of Kathryn Beck*, Marlo Thomas plays a Midwestern single woman whose life turns into a living hell after a chance affair with a fugitive terrorist. The police, embarrassed at their failure to prevent the fugitive from escaping, turn their investigative machinery onto his one-night paramour, leaking the information they glean to an eager press. Battered by the scrutiny and the screaming headlines, the heroine goes over the edge; in the course of a particularly obnoxious session of questioning, she shoots a local editor to death.

Whether or not Marlo Thomas has ever thought of her friend Geraldine Ferraro in connection with this project, the movie came to *my* mind when I read *Ferraro: My Story*, the campaign memoirs of the first woman on a major-party national ticket.* For the most interesting question raised by Mrs. Ferraro has to do with the press treatment of her vice-presidential candidacy.

The book begins with the 1984 Democratic convention in San Francisco. On short notice, and with scant expectations that such a thing could ever happen, Geraldine Ferraro, an obscure Congresswoman from Queens, a woman devoted to her husband, John Zaccaro, an even more obscure real-estate broker in lower Manhattan, received the call to make history. "It started on such a high," she writes, with the crowds, the chants of "Gerr-eee, Gerr-eee," the thrill of breaking barriers for women everywhere. But in the haste and excitement, the Zaccaros failed to reckon on press reaction to the details of their own past. As those details became public, Mrs. Ferraro and her family underwent a torture that culminated in a heart-rending attack on her own father, dead since she was eight.

Since this is America, and not ancient Athens, the drama unfolded on the Phil Donahue show, and the Zaccaro family emerged intact. Although her story has the potential for political tragedy, Mrs. Ferraro stays on the plane of the commercial she has since made for Diet Pepsi. Throughout, her diction is colloquial and her tone is gossipy, if not downright crabby. Her story emerges in patches from a welter of transcribed anecdote. Yet the book does not merit the savaging it has been given in some quarters. It should be measured not against the literature of 19th-century statesmen but against the tape-recorder work of her political contemporaries. While not as genial or rich in anecdote as Ronald Reagan's *Where's the Rest of Me?*, it tries primarily to tell a story that has poignancy and a certain dignity.

Yet Mrs. Ferraro does not do justice to that story. Especially when it comes to dealing with the intense press inquiry into her family "legacy," she raises more questions than she settles. (Some of the unanswered questions, primarily having to do with an unresolved Justice Department inquiry into whether she committed a felony in not disclosing her husband's affairs in her financial reporting while in Congress, have by her own account caused her to decide against running for the Senate this year.) She also completely fails to recognize that, given the nature of her political ambitions, the press inquiry was a necessary exercise.

In *Ferraro: My Story*, Mrs. Ferraro portrays herself, with some accuracy, as a harassed and haggard protagonist, pursued from coast to coast by a relentless and relentlessly biased press. Her first set of troubles came over financial disclosure. She blames herself for some of the furor, since she announced that her husband would release his income-tax forms when he was determined not to. His refusal whipped the press into a frenzy, compounded by a flap over irregularities in the financing of her first campaign for Congress in 1978.

Mrs. Ferraro answered the mob on what she calls her Disclosure Weekend. By her own account, her position on the ticket rode on the outcome of a "no-holds-barred" press conference. In the event, she performed extremely well, providing an almost ritualized political drama on the pattern of Richard Nixon's "Checkers" speech. And the day was finally hers altogether when a young editorial writer for the *Wall Street Journal* yelled "Answer it," after she had successfully

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* By Geraldine A. Ferraro, with Linda Bird Francke, Bantam, 340 pp., $17.95.

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dodged his question.* This outburst provoked a chorus of boos, one of the few times in memory in which reporters at a press conference chided the boorish behavior of one of their number.

With the disclosure drama resolved so tidily, one can understand the resentment of Mrs. Ferraro and those on her campaign beat when other reporters refused to close the books. But in fact she had not answered the final question, which concerned her husband's continued refusal to release supplemental income-tax forms describing his partnerships. Mr. Zaccaro maintained that he did not want to break promises of confidentiality—certainly a legitimate position. But some were now noticing that properties he owned or managed in New York's "Little Italy" showed up in court records of figures who according to the police were leaders of organized crime. Although some editors felt that these hints of a Mafia connection were tenuous and far-fetched, others believed they deserved serious investigation. The urgency for these others came not only from the substance of the case, but from the suspicion that the "establishment press" was ignoring a substantial story.

The two sides could be divided into "outsiders" like the New York *Post,* the Philadelphia *Inquirer,* and the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page, all of which went after the story aggressively, and "insiders" like the New York *Times* and the Washington *Post,* which downplayed it—to the extent, in the case of the *Times,* of burying the work of its own reporter, Ralph Blumenthal, who was the first to discover important material, only some of which got into print. There were also divisions within divisions: the *Journal*'s coverage pitted its New York staff against its Washington bureau. To complicate matters still further, the first hint of a Mafia connection came from total outcasts, the Reverend Moon's now-defunct New York *Tribune,* the small conservative weekly *Human Events,* and the *Accuracy in Media* newsletter.

The experience that followed should have been enough to shatter any lingering myth of investigative reporting *à la* Woodward-Bernstein. Investigative reporting as it is practiced in the real world depends on leaks from people who have the power of subpoena; on lucky breaks; and on the most tedious sort of work with public records. Official sources concerning Mrs. Ferraro and Mr. Zaccaro were very, very sparse. Her claims to the contrary notwithstanding, federal officials (as far as I can tell) kept total silence. Her Republican opponent in 1978, Al DelliBovi, who now held a senior job in the U.S. Department of Transportation, gave no interviews. The lucky breaks—disgruntled Zaccaro associates, anonymous envelopes stuffed with documents—came late in the game and had to be treated cautiously. Even clippings files did not help, since the 1978 campaign Mrs. Ferraro remembers as being so nasty actually ran through the middle of a New York newspaper strike.

This left the document rooms. To slog after the Zaccaros took the disposition of a graduate student immersed in the glamor of grimy binders, dog-eared files, and glaring microfiche readers. New York municipal clerks watched in amusement as packs of reporters descended on their dreary precincts. At closing time in the Surrogate Court, where real-estate records are kept, reporter after reporter from the Philadelphia *Inquirer* would emerge from behind the microfilm machines, forming a small crowd in the marbled hallway. Indeed, it may have been the necessity for such formidable drudge work that discouraged the likes of the Washington *Post,* so used to drawing on high-level leaks, from pursuing the story.

The sheer mechanics of this effort expose a crucial, if not the crucial, fact about the much-vexed issue of press bias. Of course reporters have prejudices that unconsciously or not can shape their stories, but they will report the facts. The important distortions come not from reporters but from editors, who control what goes into the paper and what the paper goes after. Serious investigations take enormous blocks of time, with no guarantee of a big story at the end. Editors shape the news by the way they allocate manpower. Steven Lovelady of the *Inquirer* smelled a major story and put up to thirty staffers on it; Ben Bradlee of the *Post* did not.

Even when the results are in, editors can discredit good work by the way they handle it: the New York *Post* secured legitimate reporting and then drove it into the ground with screaming headlines. Often enough, editors cut out disconsonant material: the New York *Times* uncovered one of the most baffling aspects of the Zaccaro case months before anyone else, and sat on it.

Editors, in short, act as filters of the vast amount of detail swarming across their desks. Sometimes they let through long columns; sometimes they squeeze out a few inches at best. The *Times*'s filter is ostensibly determined by good taste and rigorous standards of proof (at least for stories that do not fit its outlook). The *Wall Street Journal* draws much of its strength from its willingness to use different, almost opposing, filters on its news columns and its editorial page. The New York *Post* occasionally seems to operate with no filters at all. To answer the question of bias in press coverage of Mrs. Ferraro one thus has to determine the amount and shape of the material presenting itself at the editor's filter and then ask

* In the book, Mrs. Ferraro makes several bitter references to the *Wall Street Journal,* though none to me specifically (not that I dissociate myself from my colleagues). My own article for the *Journal,* on the business deal for which John Zaccaro was later indicted and convicted, appeared late in the campaign and figured in Mrs. Ferraro's appearance on the Donahue show. At the time she quoted me in her husband's defense.

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whether that barrier would have been more or less porous if another type of person or institution had been involved.

THE controversy over the Ferraro coverage, after all, almost never concerned the facts: with two notable exceptions, they were thoroughly verified. The dispute was over whether the facts should be printed. Mrs. Ferraro's father-in-law, Philip Zaccaro, the founder of P. Zaccaro & Co., the family business, had indeed vouched for the pistol permit of one of the Profaci brothers, major Mafia figures of the 50's, and had lost his own permit as a result. John Zaccaro himself had indeed been landlord or broker to several figures currently accused of a senior role in organized crime. Did these facts bear so thin a connection to the background of a potential President as not to warrant being followed up, or even mentioned?

Much as one can sympathize with the ordeal of the Zaccaro family, one must remind Mrs. Ferraro and her defenders that a great deal was at stake. The public was about to vote on a national ticket, and had to know everything it could about the persons in a position to sit in the Oval Office, and about those in whom they would place their trust. As recently as the Carter administration, some of the country's most sensitive regulatory bureaucracies had been devastated by the influence of the President's advisers. In the course of the campaign, John Zaccaro had mentioned that he would like to sit in on Cabinet meetings. The press had a duty to discover what sort of person he did business with—and there was much to discover.

The roughest blow for John Zaccaro, writes Mrs. Ferraro, was the guilty plea he had to enter on scheme-to-defraud charges resulting from a collapsed real-estate deal. The details were more serious than Mrs. Ferraro admits: for instance, one charge was that in a loan application he had told a bank his net worth was more than five times greater than it proved to be in the celebrated financial statement. But what was of national significance was Mr. Zaccaro's choice of partners. For nearly a year, it turned out, he had worked through a shell called the Teig Corporation that he co-owned with a disbarred lawyer and a convict still on probation for charges of conspiracy to commit fraud.

The disbarred lawyer, who had also been convicted (of extortion), was a tall and portly Irishman named Harold Farrell, sixty-four, the sort of genial rogue beloved by Jimmy Breslin. In her book, Mrs. Ferraro treats Farrell as something of a stray dog whom Mr. Zaccaro in a fit of generosity had invited to share his office. She also blames him for much of her husband's troubles, and the claim has some plausibility. Since his disbarment in 1967, Farrell seems to have lived on his wits, passing himself off in one law office after another by means of a considerable gift of blarney, and leaving consternation in his wake.

Mrs. Ferraro notably blames Farrell for her husband's embarassment when he was caught borrowing money from the estate of a mentally incompetent eighty-four-year-old widow. In a revealing passage she writes:

> I was stunned to hear about the loans in the midst of everything else. "What's this all about?" I now asked John.
>
> "Harold Farrell told me that it was perfectly legal to borrow the money for business and that in fact the loan would make more money for the estate," John told me. "He was a lawyer so I took his advice."
>
> Harold Farrell. My blood ran cold. Harold Farrell was no longer a lawyer, a sorry fact John had found out too late.

Mrs. Ferraro does not add that according to court records her husband continued to make this sort of loan to himself several months *after* Farrell had been unmasked. (In the court hearing on the affair, Queens Supreme Court Judge Edwin Kassoff asked Mr. Zaccaro if he had consulted a lawyer before taking the loan. "It never entered my mind," Mr. Zaccaro replied.)

In addition to giving bad advice, Farrell has had some genuinely sinister connections. When he filled out the papers for the Teig Corporation, he used a return address in the World Trade Center that turned out to be a den of international swindlers. Some reporters followed this trail to a hard bench in the New York City Housing Court, the most chaotic room in the city's judicial system, there to read the thick file of the Port Authority's eviction proceedings against FFC America Corp., occupants of Suite 8419, One World Trade Center. One morsel buried in the exhibits was an Interpol bulletin from Paris, dated June 18, 1981, warning that the president of First Finance Corporation, Paolo Pavanelli, was wanted for passing worthless checks drawn on fictitious Caribbean banks. A James P. Pavanelli had signed the lease for the FFC America suite, and an assortment of fugitives and phony Italian nobles had passed through his office. The Port Authority had nearly succeeded in ousting these questionable tenants in March 1984 when Farrell appeared at the last minute, claiming to have recently bought stock in FFC America and requesting a stay of the eviction.

The Teig Corporation papers bearing the Suite 8419 return address were filed on February 24, 1983, shortly after Mrs. Ferraro says that Farrell and Zaccaro met. Mr. Zaccaro has stated that he discovered Farrell was not a real lawyer and broke with him in December 1983. So for nearly a year, it appears, Farrell was in and out of both the FFC operation and the P. Zaccaro office.

Mr. Zaccaro denies that he knew anything about the inhabitants of Suite 8419. The New York *Times* knew a great deal—though it never shared this information with its readers. On July 24, 1984, less than a week after Mrs. Ferraro's

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nomination in San Francisco, the abrasive but talented Ralph Blumenthal was asking at the World Trade Center about Farrell ("You don't forget a call from Ralphie," said my informant), and it appears from reading the subsequent *Times* stories that Farrell became a prime source for Blumenthal. Farrell himself, however, was treated relatively gently by the paper.

Perhaps the *Times* editors considered the trail to Suite 8419 too tenuous to pass through their filter. But Suite 8419 was emblematic of the demimonde of disgraced lawyers and delisted brokers in which Mr. Zaccaro, for whatever reason, had involved himself. Everyone in this society of con men, bag men, and swindlers seems to know everyone else. If you follow just one man's career, you quickly encounter an incredible array of shady characters, none of whom you would want in the kitchen of the vice-presidential mansion, let alone in the White House.

IT MAY have been surprising, after the early rumors about the Mafia, that the hard news about John Zaccaro should turn out to be his involvement in a case of petty fraud. But it fits what we learned of his character and even jibes with Mrs. Farraro's affectionate vignettes of him. Although he did not have the disposition of a big-league criminal, he clearly was inclined to cut corners. To put it another, gentler, way, he could be the solid family man on whom Mrs. Ferraro depended and still fall into bad company. Indeed, the same qualities that endeared him to his family might have been those that prevented him from breaking totally with the "legacy" of past generations. For it seems clear that friendships with Mafia leaders had figured, and had to have figured, in the development of the Zaccaro family business.

News of this legacy first appeared in a September 13 *Wall Street Journal* editorial-page article by news reporters Anthony DeStefano, a specialist on the New York Mafia, and Jonathan Kwitny, a veteran investigator who is known in some circles as the *Journal*'s resident leftist. The article treated Mrs. Ferraro and Mr. Zaccaro with some sympathy, suggesting that they had tried to break with the past. But the story also provoked a broad controversy among journalists, some of whom devoted more time to wondering why it had appeared on the editorial rather than the news pages than they did to checking its contents.

Mrs. Ferraro, in her book, calls the article "one of the most irresponsible and vicious" of the campaign. Yet it opened a thoroughly defensible line of inquiry. The article appeared on the editorial page because it focused on a series of historical questions about the Zaccaro firm which Mrs. Ferraro had refused to answer. (As a news article, it would have been recast to deal with clients whom Mrs. Ferraro and Mr. Zaccaro had themselves worked for.) Among its revelations was the news that in 1971 and 1973, Mrs. Ferraro had represented a Little Italy figure named Lawrence Latona in some real-estate transactions.

A little geography is necessary to understand the significance of Lawrence Latona. According to a series of federal and local investigators, the Ravenite Social Club at 247 Mulberry Street was the nerve center of the branch of the Gambino organized-crime family run by Aniello Dellacroce (the "little lamb of the cross," in literal translalation). This nondescript storefront with religious figurines on the wall was founded in 1942, according to its incorporation papers, to further political, social, and athletic activities and "to inculcate in its members the highest ideals and conceptions of Americanism"; over the years, it had served as a setting for innumerable "sitdowns" (meetings to settle disputes among crime figures) and payoffs. The police had never been able to maintain a bug inside the Ravenite Club itself, though they did try surveillance from inside the trunk of a parked car and from parabolic microphones across the street, and managed to record conversations that seemed to them to involve loansharking payments, the planning of burglaries, and even the ordering of a murder in Las Vegas. One surveillance reports tells of intense activity within half an hour of the July 1979 assassination of Carmine Galente in Brooklyn.

Apartment 1 in the building across the street, 248 Mulberry, was the long-time home of Michael Vincent Catalano, the trusted lieutenant of Dellacroce. The building is owned by the Zaccaro family. Dellacroce, who died in December 1985, maintained his address half-a-block down, at 232 Mulberry. This building was owned by John Zaccaro and his mother until 1971, when they sold it to Latona and three other buyers. Latona's group was represented at the sale by Mrs. Ferraro. In September 1973, Mrs. Ferraro again represented the group when it paid off a mortgage.

IN HER book, Mrs. Ferraro mentions indignantly that in August 1984 U.S. Attorney Rudolph Giuliani "suddenly called John down to his office to be questioned as a witness about a six-year-old real-estate transaction John had nothing to do with." Other sources have said the federal investigation focused on Latona's group, although nothing has come of it so far. Latona told the New York *Times* that Mrs. Ferraro "was our attorney. I knew her husband."

Who then is Lawrence Latona? In addition to his listed occupation as a "body broker" (an arranger of traditional Italian funerals) with an office in a storefront at 236 Mulberry, Latona is the building manager for 247 Mulberry, the site of the Ravenite Club. He is also one of the club's original incorporators.

The owner of 247 Mulberry is named Joseph LaForte, Sr., and thereby hangs another tale. Although LaForte has resisted the claim in court, the FBI and the New York police insist that he is an underboss of the Gambino family who reported

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to Dellacroce. He formerly described himself as a travel consultant to the Carefree Travel Agency, an outfit with a fascinating corporate history. He now operates the parking garage next door to the Ravenite. His name became one of the major red herrings in the Zaccaro story.

The city tax rolls list building owners and managers, and the entry for 21-25 Cleveland Place across the street from the P. Zaccaro office shows John Zaccaro as the employee of Joseph LaForte. As at least three reporters discovered independently, this entry is a mistake. Mr. Zaccaro did broker a sale of two of the three contiguous buildings to LaForte, and remained as the manager of the third when it was retained by the original owner, Dr. Donald Y.T. Tse of Westport, Connecticut. The tax rolls failed to catch the division of the property. When reporters finally figured the deal out, most of them forgot it.

Yet, like an episode of *Ironside* in which a missing corpse turns out to have been buried *underneath* another body, there is more to the story. Apparently only the Philadelphia *Inquirer* took the elementary step of checking city court records, because it was the only paper to report that the sale had led to a lawsuit. Dr. Tse broke his silence to tell the *Inquirer* that he felt John Zaccaro had forced him into the sale. He produced a letter from Zaccaro containing a remarkable echo of the movies: "Dr. Tse, you must take this offer because I will never get another buyer like this." According to Dr. Tse, when he heard from an appraiser that the buildings were worth far more than the sale price, he tried to stall the closing. But LaForte then brought suit to force the sale, reminding Dr. Tse that "the Plaintiff has been very patient." Dr. Tse complained to the *Inquirer* that the Zaccaro agency appeared to have provided LaForte with a document to support his suit. When the *Inquirer* asked why he had not fired Zaccaro as the manager of his remaining building, he replied, "I couldn't. That is forbidden city."

These stories were damaging enough, but the article that cut the deepest came in the October 18 New York *Post*. Under the headline, "The Ferraros of Newburgh: How the American Dream Started for One Family," *Post* writers Guy Hawtin and Jeff Wells claimed that Dominick Ferraro, Geraldine's father, ran his popular nightclub in the wide-open Hudson River city of the 1930's under the patronage of organized-crime boss Michael DeVasto. The story, replete with a picture of Legs Diamond and a gratuitous reference to Frank Niti and Eliot Ness, revealed that Mrs. Ferraro's mother and father had been charged with gambling violations shortly before her father's untimely death. The writers went further, implying that Dominick Ferraro had died under mysterious circumstances.

It was this insinuation, Mrs. Ferraro reports, that drove her to tears on a campaign flight, in one of the most noticed incidents of her campaign. In a remarkable postscript, Mrs. Ferraro writes that after the campaign she went back to Newburgh for the first time in forty years to conduct her own investigation. Seeking out her father's undertaker, and the housekeeper of his doctor, she learned that there was no mystery, and that the death was from natural causes as she had always thought.*

THE attack on Mrs. Ferraro's father marked the climax of the campaign drama, the point at which her personal life seemed most out of control. It must be one of the factors that caused her to say at the time that if she could have seen all the pain the race would produce, she might not have embarked on it. (In her book, Mrs. Ferraro makes it emphatically clear that she has since changed her mind.) Yet the insinuation was *not* typical of the reporting on her family's affairs. Most of the other stories that irked Mrs. Ferraro produced legitimate information, extremely relevant to a voter's decision on a national ticket.

From her perspective, Mrs. Ferraro naturally pays little attention to an internal debate that was raging among the furies at her heels: were they being too harsh or too soft? Some journalists wondered aloud whether the press was wrong to hound her. Others asked, did the press hound her at all? Where one segment of the press complained about post-Watergate hypocrisy and a moral double standard, others doubted that a story existed at all. This internal debate is scanted by Mrs. Ferraro, but it raises the issue of press bias in an almost grotesquely extreme form.

If the press as a whole faced its role honestly, it would have to plead guilty to *all* of the charges against it. Some journalists did practice a double standard—in the sense, that is, that they stopped short on trails they would certainly have pursued in the case of a white male conservative. By the same token, some reporting on Mrs. Ferraro was indeed sensationalistic and savage. Both extremes were attributable to a failure which a large segment of the "establishment press" shared with Mrs. Ferraro herself—a failure to confront the full significance of the fact that a person who had been named to a position of potentially enormous importance had been exposed to some definitively unsavory connections.

* Mrs. Ferraro apparently missed the retraction the *Post* ran the day after the October 18 article in the form of an interview with the doctor who signed her father's death certificate. The *Post* could not resist bragging that it had located the ninety-two-year-old doctor when most of Newburgh thought he died long ago; in fact he did die shortly before Mrs. Ferraro herself made her return journey home.

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Execution Day in Riyadh

Clifford Hallam

> And the execution began! . . . Many did not care to watch it but lay with eyes closed in the sand; they all knew; now Justice was being done.
> —KAFKA, "In the Penal Colony"

Soon after I arrived in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, in 1980 to teach at the university, a new colleague pointed out the parking lot called Dira Square, in which executions took place.

"There it is, right next to the Friday Mosque. That's it—chop-chop square," he said, gesturing toward the distant Ministry of Justice. "They slaughter the prisoner beneath the clock tower," he added.

"I love the raw symbolism," I remarked, scanning the area. The anomalous clock tower, standing amid the rows of parked Mazdas, Larks, and Toyotas, looked suddenly threatening, ominous. Inwardly, I asked myself if I could bear to watch a man being executed, especially by decapitation. Thinking—almost abstractly—of the blood, the human butchery, I decided that I could not. Films like *Taxi Driver* and *Apocalypse Now* brought me as close as I wanted to come to explicit bloodletting. Moreover, on moral grounds, I had always felt that the arguments against capital punishment were persuasive; I wanted no part of it.

But in the weeks following that brief tour of Riyadh, the subject maintained a strange half-life among my friends and colleagues at the university. At any social gathering, during private conversations, even in taxis and buses, someone was likely to allude to Dira Square, to al-Johar (the royal executioner), to a grisly botched beheading, to the rumor of an impending spectacle at "Johar's Chopping Center." Inevitably, the university wits had a field day: "In Riyadh, when they say 'heads will roll,' heads roll"; "Let's go down to Dira Stadium and catch the double-header on Friday"; "Johar passed his friend Abdu last week and cut him dead"; "If you work for Johar [a modern shopping mall], you always get a-head"—variations on a theme. In Riyadh, a particularly dull place to live and work, the topic of executions provided an interesting diversion.

As folklore, the procedure of the *idaam* (literally, "the annihilation") itself had achieved the status of legend, although the event in question actually occurred on a fairly regular basis for all—except, of course, women—to witness. Authorities on the subject practically outnumbered their listeners, but the "facts" proved to be (at best) second-hand. One was assured of the following random details: the prisoner has been drugged; he has been tortured by electric thimbles; no felon receives the death penalty unless he has "freely" confessed (hence the electricity); Westerners are pushed to the front for a better view; the victim is brought out bound, gagged, and blindfolded; the executioner addresses his charge, asking his forgiveness, a moment before the great sword falls; if the crime committed was particularly heinous, Johar cuts his victim several times before administering the *coup de grâce*. Depending on the raconteur, any one of these details might be omitted, or an elegant variation substituted. Thus, the local ur-text of "The Tale of the Execution" was formed, the supreme exercise in hermeneutics.

As everyone was sure of his information, but no two people concurred, everything was cast into doubt. Each narrative element remained in suspension. Indeed, only the core fact—executions took place from time to time—was not in dispute, but there agreement ended. Given the circumstances, what constituted authority? The *Arab News* (Riyadh's English-language daily, composed in Orwellian Newspeak) provided few clues. If an execution took place on a given Friday, a short notice would appear on Saturday, the first working day of the Islamic week:

> MURDERER EXECUTED
>
> RIYADH. Mohammed Abdulaziz Yamani was beheaded here after Friday noon prayers for the murder of his wife. The Ministry of Interior, which upheld the sentence pronounced by a *sharia* [Islamic law] court, vowed to rid the kingdom of moral pollution and to strike with an iron fist those who violate the laws of the Holy Koran.

Characteristically, as in the above example, the

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government-controlled press offered a bare minimum of unverified and unverifiable facts followed by shrill self-justification.

For a month or two I attempted my own investigative reporting, short of actually witnessing a Friday execution myself. I was willing to talk to anyone (with the aid of an interpreter if necessary)—even Johar, a taboo figure in the community because (legally or not) he had spilled blood. But I was informed by Saudis that this interview could never take place. Johar was clearly out of bounds. Usually my informants were Americans, though I discussed the matter with a fair number of British, Canadian, Irish, and Pakistani expatriates who had lived in Riyadh for some time. No one residing in Saudi Arabia, particularly the capital, is unaware of *sharia* justice; in Riyadh, the centrally located Friday Mosque adjoining Dira Square is a local landmark, which is regularly pointed out to newcomers, as had been the case with me.

I also questioned, with studied casualness, the three or four Riyadhis whom I sometimes engaged as informal Arabic teachers. Curiously enough, my native informants proved to be no more reliable than the most credulous and naive expatriate. In fact, the young Saudis with whom I spoke were obviously terrified of Dira Square and acted extremely nervous when talking about it. Even those Saudis who addressed me as "my brother," an unmistakable sign of trust, were uneasy answering my questions. None actually claimed to have witnessed an execution. For a long time I was deeply puzzled by their attitude. Finally, one of my informants, born and reared in Riyadh, offered a plausible explanation: "The newspaper says that the prisoner has committed a serious crime such as rape or murder. But we know the reason is politics; the government wants to show its power." I also sensed that my Saudi informants who spoke fluent English and who understood Western sensibilities were ashamed of this brutal spectacle, though, paradoxically, some rigorously defended the practice.

Finally, after the fifth or fiftieth version of "The Tale of the Execution," I began to reconsider my veto on attending one: here, finally, was a Riyadh rumor that could be verified, or at least laid to rest.

Yet I still had serious moral qualms. The prevailing attitude toward executions might be compared with the social stance toward pornography: everyone is interested, titillated, but no one is ready to admit publicly that he would go out of his way to see a pornographic movie. Moreover, as one six-year veteran of life in Riyadh, put it: "Executions are never announced beforehand, so those who want to see them have to hang around the parking lot—like vultures." The scavenger simile struck me as particularly apt; indeed, the calculated effort required to watch a man get his head cut off meant a kind of unsavory participation in the gruesome proceedings. On the other hand, no matter how reprehensible, voyeuristic, or sadistic the role of spectator might be, witnessing a public execution in the final decades of the 20th century had to be an extraordinary experience, a truly unique opportunity. I finally decided to leave the matter open—to "go with the flow."

II

IN FACT, the series of choices that brought me to Saudi Arbia in the first place were made in response to a pattern of economic and personal circumstances rather than free and clear decisions. Weeks after my successful interview in Houston, although leaning toward accepting a post in Riyadh, I had not yet made a commitment. A few days before the deadline, however, I nearly balked: PBS television, after much soul-searching, had decided to show the British-made docudrama *Death of a Princess,* a recreation of the supposedly true story of a princess of the Saudi royal family who had been executed for adultery. The film had become something of a *cause célèbre.* The Saudis were outraged by it, and attempts had been made to stop its being shown in America.

A moment before the program began, the station manager virtually coerced the viewing public into staying tuned for the post-film discussion by a panel of experts. We viewers were earnestly promised an open and even-handed analysis to explain what we were about to see. I was somewhat bemused by the evident concern that viewers might become confused and begin to draw erroneous conclusions about Saudi justice. At the same time, I was deeply annoyed by the obsequious, hushed tone of this announcement, for it carried a message that was all too clear: we must never offend the Saudis, who, after all, run OPEC, which, in turn, holds the West hostage to its oil needs. Since 1972 the highest business and political authorities had been repeating this warning ad nauseam.

The film itself hardly earned its international notoriety: from start to finish *Death of a Princess* is a soft-boiled, mediocre affair, barely worth the effort and risk, not to mention the consequences, of making it. (A native Riyadhi later told me that the man who cooperated with the British filmmakers had himself been executed.) The participants in the unrehearsed discussion that followed the television presentation, with the sole exception of the British journalist who had been involved in the production, turned in a better performance than the professional actors in the film. When argument could be distinguished from theatrical hand-wringing, each expert seemed to advance the position of cultural relativism. How can we judge the mores of a civilization we know nothing about? they demanded. But the award went to the Saudi lawyer (a practically meaning-

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less term when translated into English, since advocacy plays no part in the *sharia* system); among other things, he gratuitously lied: "Why does it show the journalist with a spy camera hidden in his cigarette case? Taking pictures at an execution is not forbidden." Of course, as everyone who has landed at a Saudi airport knows, passengers are warned about picture-taking even before leaving the plane. In Riyadh, simply to carry a camera puts one at risk; taking pictures of "sensitive" subjects (which range from mud dwellings and official buildings to women, whiskey bottles, car wrecks, and the national airports) is strictly forbidden.

My mixed feelings about Riyadh after seeing the film were not relieved by my dealings with the Saudi agents in Houston. By the end of the summer the Saudi Educational Mission had managed to misplace my reimbursement check for the interview expenses, lose my passport, and forget to send my plane ticket. I seemed to be entering a zone where nothing was probable and yet everything was possible. However, at the last minute I found myself at Kennedy International Airport with passport, visa, and one-way ticket to Riyadh. While glancing through an issue of *Time* in the passenger lounge, I noticed a full-page advertisement for Saudia Airlines. The photograph showed a close-up of a Tri-star plane with green Arabic script on the nose and in the space above it the legend: WELCOME TO OUR WORLD. Coincidentally, once on board and well into the fourteen-hour nonstop flight to Dharhan, I reached into the pocket of the seatback in front of me and found one of those glossy magazines published by commercial airlines. This Saudi publication was called *Ahlan Washalan* ("Welcome, Most Welcome"), the conventional Arabic greeting in many Middle Eastern countries. My knowledge of the Islamic world in September 1980 was neither broad nor deep, but even I knew that the Arabs were famous for their hospitality, and these initial signs seemed to confirm it.

That first blast of Saudi air at the Dharhan airport was like a physical assault: hot as a pizza oven and smelling strongly of petroleum. The simple explanation is that large oil refineries are located near the airport; but at the time it seemed like a bad joke perpetrated by overzealous public-relations people, like the ludicrous spectacle of grass-skirted women greeting tourists in Honolulu. However, no public-relations firm figured in the debacle one met inside the air terminal. My first contact with the Perfect System—a term Saudis often use to describe the Islamic state—quickly gave the lie to all those slick advertisements proclaiming "welcome." In fact, from that maddening encounter in September 1980 until June 1983, when I left Saudi Arabia forever, I have never felt less welcome in any country, city, neighborhood, public building, or workplace I have known.

Inside the terminal, as in the parable of the sheep and the goats, the non-Saudis were quickly culled from the group of arrivals and herded from one line to the next. The simple matter of stamping passports developed into a major project, attended by delay and confusion. Dozens of armed soldiers, some of whom appeared to be up long past their bedtime, skulked about the terminal, ostensibly keeping order, but succeeding only in creating disorder by interfering with the entry formalities. Even after passing through passport control in full sight of these young guards, I was accosted several times with the command "*Jawazee!*" ("Passport!") before I could move into the customs area.

The spectacle of a Saudi customs officer going through luggage is shocking. Each suitcase is simply ravaged: personal belongings strewn over the counter, valuable possessions mindlessly vandalized, fallen objects trampled underfoot. As new arrivals we were bewildered, mortified; we avoided eye contact. Travel-weary, confused, and angry, many of us experienced in that painful hour an equally painful revelation: we were not welcome guests or even respected foreign experts, but necessary hirelings—and permanent outsiders.

THAT hot September night was the first, but certainly not the last, time I witnessed or experienced at first hand uncalled-for abuse from Saudi officials and functionaries. In officialdom, the suppliant for the all-necessary *worrek* (permission to do or obtain *anything*) was powerless. No matter what your status might be in England, America, or Germany, you were nothing in the university personnel offices. A full professor, a former department chairman, an internationally recognized authority in a major scientific field—all were at one time or another reduced to babbling plaintively for their passports, their contractually guaranteed plane-ticket vouchers, even their monthly salaries. The arrogant, sullen clerk to whom these entreaties were addressed meanwhile drank tea, read the newspaper, or talked incessantly on the telephone, pointedly ignoring the distraught individual who had been standing in front of him waiting, explaining, pleading for fifteen minutes to a half-hour. At some point the clerk might turn and snarl: "Return back after Saturday and you can get it, *inshallah*" ("God willing"). No recourse; no appeal—the matter is closed.

At the frontier, in the personnel offices, even on the street, one felt repeatedly violated. A supreme irony is that Saudis themselves are the most secretive and self-protective of people, yet in my experience they are appallingly insensitive to the need for privacy, let alone the sensibilities, of others. To choose but one example among many, a young Saudi student whom I barely knew began to examine an image of the Buddha on my neck chain. It never occurred to him apparently to ask

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permission or to excuse himself before treating my person in this most familiar manner. After squinting and grimacing at the medal for a moment or two, he announced to the others looking on: "Him [the Buddha] and monkey, same-same." But any lack of respect toward Islam—real or imagined, implicit or explicit—would be sufficient grounds for serious reprisal, not excluding assassination. As one of my students explained: "If someone believes in another religion, it is not good that he should die, but if he is against Islam then we will surely kill him."

As a matter of historical fact, the Saudi government outlawed the institution of slavery only in 1962. Residual attitudes and their corresponding practices remain very much in evidence. "Masters" are persons with innate rights, privileges, and dignity; the rest are non-persons and treated accordingly. Further, a strict pecking order is tacitly understood to obtain among all foreigners. The top rank is not held by other Arabs or even Muslims, but by Americans, who are grudgingly admired and respected, although they are known to be decadent shirkers and in some cases atheists —a theological position nearly ungraspable for most Saudis. In descending order there are other light-skinned Westerners (race prejudice is an institutional and social fact in Saudi Arabia); other Arabs and Muslims (an unsettled order of precedence, but most would agree that Yemenis are nearly beyond the pale); and finally, East Indian Hindus, who are relegated to the outer darkness. Treated with outward contempt, these people are generally hired to sweep the streets, beginning at 3:00 A.M., and to pick up garbage. As dark-skinned, non-Muslim polytheists, with a long history of being "enemies of Islam," Indian Hindus have no status whatsoever in the Perfect System.

There are other signs of imperfection in the system as well. Despite clichés about peace and security in Riyadh, the weak are continually and habitually preyed upon. Western doctors practicing in the various open clinics throughout the city regularly told me about the shocking number of cases involving children of both sexes suffering from gonorrhea, syphilis, genital herpes, and other proofs of adult sexuality that had been forcibly visited on the young and helpless. Public outrages are rare, but rape is not unknown in Riyadh. Indeed, the threat of rape is the collective waking nightmare, a national obsession informing and shaping the very fabric of Saudi society.

The horror of rape, literal or metaphorical, is unmistakably reflected in the unique character of Saudi architecture: there is no public building or private villa without its forbidding wall topped with shards of glass, no window without bars; one is confronted with a convict's bad dream of locks, bolts, chains, barbed wire, and spiked fences at every point of entry. The present city of Riyadh was begun, in essence, fewer than twenty years ago, yet it resembles nothing so much as a cluster of fortresses. The architectural message of Riyadh is clear and unequivocal: KEEP OUT!

Leaving nothing to chance, the Saudi government backs this explicit message with a lethal threat. Guardhouses with heavily-armed sentries are as much a part of the public scene as are the hundreds of mosques with their blaring loudspeakers. Several different cadres of police and soldiers, some out of uniform, patrol every quarter and every street on a twenty-four-hour basis. Riyadh is a city under occupation, but the grim and watchful forces, with their scores of informers, are its own. And most telling of all, those huge villas designed for multiple occupancy, corresponding to the Middle Eastern concept of the extended family, feature *one* entrance, which also serves as the only exit. As Heraclitus observes: "The way in is the way out."

III

By February 1981, nearly six months after I had arrived in Saudi Arabia, the novelty of living in an exotic capital had worn off. Owing to various projects, everyday frustrations, and academic responsibilities, my original keen interest in Dira Square (which, incidentally, was located near my apartment) had given way to a number of problems that always seemed to demand my immediate attention. Moreover, regarding the highly-charged matter of actually witnessing the spectacle, I had finally decided not to decide, but to let events take their course.

One Friday morning I was interrupted in my reading by Alan Neil, one of my best friends in Riyadh and a close neighbor. In previous conversations he seemed unabashedly enthusiastic about attending an execution, but months passed and he had never bothered to loiter in the hot sun on a Friday noon to see if anything would happen. On this particular morning, he had been waiting for a bus when he noticed the black prison van and ambulance, with a police escort, heading for Dira—according to local wisdom, a sure sign that an execution was imminent. Alan hurried back to see if I might be interested in going along.

"You know something," he said, slightly out of breath, "I think they're going to whop someone's head off down at the mosque this morning. Want to walk over there and take a look?"

Without thinking I agreed to accompany him and quickly got ready.

The walk from the Suwayylem Street apartment building to Dira Square took less than five minutes, ample time to consider my decision. I reflected on the fact that nothing in my background had prepared me for this sight. The amount of bloodshed for which I had been personally responsible would hardly fill a teacup: a couple of bloody noses and facial cuts in street fights as a teenager and later in karate matches. Neither had I seen much blood spilled under other cir-

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cumstances. Ruefully I recalled the time I had nearly fainted after giving a pint of blood to the Red Cross. All in all, not much to prepare me for a beheading. What if I were to faint, get sick, or bolt from the scene? Was it true (as I had always suspected) that I was deficient in the Right Stuff? I also considered the possible long-range psychological consequences. Watching an execution might well result in recurring, traumatic nightmares. Literature offered a number of cautionary tales detailing profound personality changes consequent on a shattering experience: as in the case of Melville's Benito Cereno, whose ordeal "cast a shadow on his soul," or Hawthorne's Goodman Brown, whose "dying hour was gloom"—or, more precisely, Kurtz in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, who countenanced beheadings and even decorated the fence around his shack with the skulls; his dying words are legend: "The horror! The horror!"

In sight of the parking lot I could see Saudis in their distinctive national dress standing in the back of pickup trucks facing the Ministry of Justice to get a better view. Suddenly, I had a vivid image of my first parachute jump, which coincided with my maiden plane ride. Peering out of the open doorway of the Cessna 180, the wind at gale force and the noise of the engine a deafening roar, I recognized, with an inward gasp, the microscopic lettering on the roof of ADAM'S AIR PARK hangar, a large building reduced to half the size of my thumbnail—and we were still climbing to jump altitude. At that moment I addressed myself aloud, though neither the pilot nor the jump-master could hear me over the racket: "Cliff, what the hell are you doing here?"

I silently repeated this question as we approached the cleared area about the size of a football field now cordoned off by a living barricade of soldiers, each brandishing an Uzi (Israeli-made) machine gun. In utter disbelief I checked my observation with Alan, who replied in a matter-of-fact tone: "Yes, they buy them indirectly from the Belgians."

"That explains it," I said, freely accepting the kind of non sequitur one heard practically every day in Riyadh.

But the soldiers were all "out of uniform," and many of them displayed unmilitary bulges at the waistline; in any case, they did not menace the crowd. Rather, these weekend warriors, some sporting corporal's stripes haphazardly secured by a single safety pin at the shoulder, ignored guarding procedures and chatted amiably with one another while scuffing their unlaced, unshined boots on the pavement. Occasionally, one would greet an acquaintance in the crowd: *"Ahlain, Ahmed. Kayf halek?"* ("Two welcomes, Ahmed. How are you?") And having been asked the identical question in return, the soldier would mumble *"al-humdillilah"* ("God be praised") and resume his conversation with the man standing next to him.

These two hundred heavily-armed soldiers seemed somehow superfluous. Although there was the usual pushing and shoving as the spectacle unfolded, one felt that there was no danger of riot. (Later, I learned that the extraordinary precautions were ordered to protect the executioner, who, having slain so many men, is a potential target for aggrieved family members, obliged, according to ancient tribal mores, to take revenge.) Standing there, I felt quite secure despite the fact that I was in range of all those machine guns; actually, I had sensed a more threatening atmosphere elsewhere—at passport control, or even in the university cashier's office.

The spectators, likewise, composed mostly of Saudis, Pakistanis, and Koreans (but virtually no Westerners), remained peaceful, relaxed—and unusually quiet. The noise and menace were provided by the loudspeakers, facing every direction, on the four minarets of the nearby Friday Mosque, from which was emitted a constant, shrill harangue in demotic Arabic. Meanwhile, everyone stared at the official vehicles parked at a distance in front of the Ministry of Justice and City Hall. Even first-timers like myself knew that the cast of characters we had come to see would emerge from the police cars and jeeps—and from the black van—that waited before us in the late morning glare.

Time passed, but the cleared area remained empty; the sun pressed down like a giant's fevered hand as the hands of the Dira clock moved toward noon. At ten minutes to twelve, the harangue from the loudspeakers abruptly ceased and an unnatural stillness enveloped the square for several seconds. Gradually, I became aware of muffled street noises and the barely perceptible murmur of the crowd, now numbering well over two thousand, patiently waiting in the hot sun. At once, a huge swarm of worshippers streamed from the mosque and immediately pressed into the mass of spectators. Space near the front, already at a premium, was claimed by the newcomers, who expertly wriggled into the tightly-packed area.

THE magic hour passed; nothing happened. I could see hundreds of people assembled on the roof of a building at the edge of the Dira *suq* beyond the clock tower. From that vantage point, they could look directly into the square, though at some distance from the spectacle. My attention wandered. Alan nudged my shoulder, and I instantly refocused on the burnished black van, from which a half-dozen soldiers emerged helping one another down the step. One carried a sheaf of thin canes that looked like shepherd's crooks; they were about four feet in length. He distributed them two or three at a time to his companions. A few of the men pressed the ends of their canes into the pavement, apparently to test their flexibility, arching them into a bow; others, with a whipping motion, caused them to flow like silk in the wind. We were about to witness a

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jelléd, a flogging, for some minor offense like drinking or fornication—the latter to be sharply distinguished from adultery, which is punishable by the sword or, in case a woman is convicted, by stoning. (The princess of the British docudrama was apparently shot, but she was executed by the royal family and not sentenced by a *sharia* court, which would have handed down a traditional method of execution.) A number of Saudis informed me that, as an alternative to stoning, an adulterous woman might be hurled from the highest point in the city, but this had not occurred in Riyadh, at least during recent years—or so I was told.

Two culprits, both strapping young men in their early twenties, were taken from the jeep where they had been languishing since early morning as they awaited their hundred lashes. The taller of the two, flanked by soldiers and officials, strode unhindered to a spot deep in the cleared area, where he lay face down on the tarmac in the direction of the nearby mosque. Immediately, a soldier squatted on his heels near the prisoner's head and firmly grasped both his wrists. At the same time a pair of soldiers, each brandishing a cane, stationed themselves on either side of the prisoner near the lower half of his body. An official stepped forward and read the sentence very rapidly in formal Arabic. He then gestured to the officers. At that moment the two soldiers began flogging the prisoner alternately on the lower back and buttocks. The Koran placed under the whipping arm as a means of restraint—about which one heard so much from the self-styled experts—was not in evidence.

With each stroke the flogger raised the wand above his head and brought it down smartly on the target. When one flogger struck, the other raised his arm, so that the blows rained down steadily and without pause: whyup, whyup, whyup, whyup—the canes fell rhythmically striking the cotton *thobe* (shift) and the helpless backside of the man stretched out on the blacktop. The hundred lashes (actually, a few less) took perhaps forty-five seconds to administer. When the punishment was over, the prisoner quickly regained his feet and returned unassisted to the jeep.

The second prisoner, after assuming the same position, began to jerk violently after the first few blows. As the flogging continued, he flopped and thrashed like a beached fish until the soldier in front offered his lap, an incongruous and tender moment in the remorseless ritual. The floggers, however, never let up and seemed to lay on with a will. In their zeal, a cane occasionally snapped; in such cases, the soldier turned to an assistant, selected another cane, and returned to the job at hand. Although the prisoner was clearly in agony throughout the ordeal, he never cried out. Finally, after receiving the full measure of lashes, he painfully got to his feet and limped back to the jeep to join his similarly chastened comrade. During the entire ceremony the crowd remained silent, unresponsive; it might have been a religious service.

THE punishment area was again empty, but no one moved from his place. I kept my attention on the jeep in which the two prisoners, their public suffering and humiliation behind them, sat awaiting transport back to prison. From the corner of my eye I caught a movement to the far left of the jeep. A young Saudi, dressed in dazzling white, was being helped from the back of the van by two soldiers who gripped his arms tightly as he negotiated the step. Once safely on the ground, the guards released him, although it was immediately obvious that he was hobbled hand and foot by wrist manacles and leg irons.

The condemned man appeared to be under thirty. He had pleasant clean-cut features; nothing in his appearance or demeanor suggested the thug or desperado. He might have been one of my upper-level literature students: serious, intelligent, thin as a whip. I stared intently at his face as he walked, slowly but deliberately, toward the knot of soldiers and officials waiting under the clock tower. His expression bore no trace of terror or confusion; neither did he affect a defiant manner in these last moments, when all social sanctions become meaningless. The only assault on his dignity were the leg irons, which caused him to proceed in a halting, lurching parody of the slow march. About halfway to his destination, he reached up and caught the tail end of his *gutra* (headpiece) and, with a toss of his head, let it flutter to the ground, where it lay on the macadam. I momentarily entertained the thought that the Saudi government was eliminating one of its very finest citizens.

When the condemned man reached the spot, he faced the mosque and knelt on the ground. An official stepped forward and, as in the preliminary to the floggings, read a brief notice over the prisoner. A soldier then grasped the man's collar and in two or three short jerks tore the *thobe* partway down his back, leaving the neck exposed to the first several vertebrae. As if by a signal the crowd began chanting "*Allah akbar, Allah akbar*" ("God is great, God is great"), continuing until the sentence was carried out. Meanwhile, the condemned man had assumed a nearly prostrate position, as in prayer; the upper part of his body bent well forward, and his chin rested on his chest, so that he was looking at the ground. Throughout, he neither moved nor flinched. The guttural, monotonous cadence emanating from the crowd lent a medieval atmosphere to the scene beneath the clock tower; it was a weirdly anachronistic tableau—each figure carefully arranged and precisely delineated, as in a tapestry.

Instinctively, I turned my head to see a huge black Saudi, his stern face creased with tribal

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scars, walking slowly but with great purpose across the square. It was al-Johar. He wore the native dress (white *thobe* and red-checkered *schmaal*); on his left shoulder was a large black sash. He was armed with a .45-caliber pistol strapped to his waist in a covered holster. On his left hip hung a magnificent scabbard, arching gently upward in an elongated crescent. Without breaking stride he unsheathed his weapon with one smooth motion, like a Samurai warrior. He held the fearsome sword in his right hand as lightly as a reed, the bright steel glinting in the midday sun.

At the last moment several hundred spectators rose as one man, partially blocking the view. Those standing nearby began to shift about to see better. A tall thin Yemeni, who had somehow managed to squeeze between Alan and me, literally hung on Alan's shoulder, and I found myself staring, close range, at the back of the man's head. Pushing myself forcefully to the right, I could once again make out the scene, as if through a peephole. The slightest movement by those in front of me, however, effectively closed off the view. Finally, as Johar approached the condemned man, I hit upon the stratagem of hopping up and down on my toes. This offered the visual effect of a strobe light, interrupting the natural flow of movement like an animated cartoon at slow speed —each pose stark and discrete.

Johar stationed himself to the right of the kneeling prisoner. He suspended the sword about eight inches over the man's neck, holding the weapon steady and taking careful aim. He then raised the blade vertically and with one powerful blow struck at the base of the neck, nearly severing it through. The head spun at a grotesque angle to the spurting stump and—horribly—a spume of blood rose and hung suspended in the bright air. Uncannily, everything froze. From a great distance, as in a dream, I heard a familiar karate yell "EEEEESAAAHHHHH!" not realizing at first that the cry was emanating from my own throat. Then the body, instantaneously transformed as if by magic from a living breathing person into a mass of dead matter, crumpled and fell gently, almost gracefully, on its side. The chanting stopped, followed by vigorous applause—a stellar performance. Johar squatted by the corpse and spat copiously on the dripping blade, before wiping it clean on the sleeve of the man he had just killed.

A Saudi doctor with a stethoscope came forward and pronounced the man dead, while soldiers arranged the body. Someone had retrieved the *gutra* and, after aligning the head, wrapped the cloth around the neck. Instantly, it turned a deep purple. The body lay in state for a moment, looking quite peaceful, until the ambulance pulled up and the corpse was roughly placed on a crude stretcher made of wooden slats, thrust in the rear of the vehicle, and driven away. When the ambulance left, the soldiers were dismissed. The crowd immediately surged, en masse, to the site of the execution, and we were carried along with it by main force. Suddenly I looked down at my feet to see a huge pool of blood gleaming blackly on the pavement. Bits of froth, like pieces of cotton, floated in the gore. Saudis from either side approached the blood, ritually spat in it, and turned contemptuously away.

The spectacle I had long agonized over and had waited months to see was over.

IV

"WE MAY well ask ourselves whether there is not some general conclusion, some lesson, if possible, of hope and encouragement to be drawn from this melancholy record of human error and folly which has engaged our attention in this [account]," Sir James Frazer mused in the concluding passages of his monumental study of magic and religion, *The Golden Bough*. Indeed, the spectacle I witnessed some years ago seems to cry out for "some lesson of hope and encouragement," but I have never been able to find one. In Saudi Arabia, at least, public executions are hardly a deterrent to serious crime. Despite solemn claims by Saudis or their apologists Riyadh is not free of crime, nor is it safe to walk the streets there—except during business hours. And the price each citizen (and each foreigner) pays for this superficial sense of security is total abridgement of civil rights. The issue is moot in any case, since no one in Riyadh holds a brief for due process, open trials, or a free press—not to mention access to records, *any* records. Judging by the ethos of the culture on a day-to-day basis, one is not likely to conclude that justice prevails in the kingdom; what one finds instead is favoritism, corruption, inconsistency, nepotism, bureaucratic hegemony, and mindless, constant harassment, along with implicit threat in all sectors of everyday life. Far from being an emblem of justice, the public executions underscore the pervasive *injustice* in Saudi Arabia.

What of my personal reactions to the *idaam* I witnessed at Dira Square? My fears proved totally groundless; I have yet to dream of a beheading, nor do I suffer from a morbid preoccupation with the subject. The distance between my vantage point and the site of the execution was undoubtedly a factor; basically, the spectacle seemed unreal. To be sure, I was deeply shocked at the time, but not permanently traumatized. And with respect to the man I saw kneeling before his executioner beneath the clock tower, I am reminded of Byron, who, on reporting his response to witnessing three men beheaded by the guillotine, wrote that he soon felt indifferent to the horror of the bloodshed—"though," he added, "I would have saved them if I could."

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Kafka's Father, Agnon's Mother, Bellow's Cousins

Robert Alter

WHAT happens in the fictional representation of the family? Fiction is informed by an impulse to generalize, to symbolize, to make the particular somehow exemplary—and often, I would add, exemplary of aspects of existence by no means limited to social institutions and their consequences in individual lives. Thus, a social institution appearing in a fictional text may be neither a laboratory specimen of a general condition nor an individual case study, though it may often oscillate over some ambiguous middle ground between the two. Recall the famous first sentence of *Anna Karenina*: "Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." It is of course the second clause that is to be the subject of Tolstoy's novel, as it is, indeed, of every novel, for about happy families there is hardly anything to be narrated. But that second clause operates in an odd, unsettling state of tension with the first clause, as if somehow the novel could make sense of the peculiarity of the particular only by setting it against the background of what is universally shared. As we read on, we discover that the Karenins and the Oblonskys are wretchedly unhappy each in their own way, but their unhappiness is, after all, also exemplary, just as the eventual happiness of Levin and Kitty is in certain regards decidedly peculiar. The very assertions, then, about what is typical and what is unique may be reversible, and that instability of the seemingly typical characterizes most fictional expressions of social realities.

In discussing the Jewish family in literature, the question we must ask is what writers make of the family rather than what picture of the actual family we can build by scrutinizing their texts. It does not, for example, seem to me feasible to draw valid general inferences about what has happened to the Jewish family in America by canvassing a sampling of American Jewish novels. An instructive failed project of this sort is an essay published some years ago on the Jewish mother in contemporary American fiction by the neo-Orthodox critic, Harold Fisch. According to Fisch, in the traditional Jewish family the father was endowed with an aura of authority by virtue of the domestic religious system over which he presided. Once belief was eroded and the bonds of observance went slack, the father became a displaced person, powerless, pathetic, figuratively or literally constipated, while the possessive, overbearing, guilt-inducing mother now reigned supreme. In this way, the notorious Jewish mother of American fiction of the 60's was the clear symptom of a social pathology of post-traditional Jewish life.

Like most sweeping sociological generalizations, there is a grain of truth in all this, but I am skeptical about whether it is the sort of truth that would stand the test of statistical analysis. If this is more or less the image we get of Jewish mothers and fathers in, say, the early novels of Philip Roth, we are surely entitled to ask how much of this is typical of second-generation families of the Jewish middle class in the urban centers of the Northeast, how much is attributable to the personal experience of Philip Roth, how much to the generic and formal necessities of the kind of fiction he is writing, that is, a variety of erotic *Bildungsroman* in which the plot of attempted self-discovery through exogamous union needs the possessive, rasping, anaphrodisiac mother as an obstacle to overcome.

What I am proposing to do here, then, is to offer not an overview of the modern Jewish family through the evidence of literary texts but rather some instances of how certain elements of the sociology of the modern Jewish family have been transmuted in fiction. I will focus on three major figures working in three different languages: Franz Kafka, S.Y. Agnon, and Saul Bellow. The three can by no means suggest all that has been made by modern writers of the Jewish family, but they may indicate three cardinal points on the map of possibilities. I will proceed in chronological order, though I do not mean to imply a necessary historical chronology; the sequence will be from fathers to mothers to cousins.

AMONG the writings of Kafka, the primary document on his relation to the family is the *Letter to His Father*, a text of some

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20,000 words that he wrote in November 1919, just five years before his death, and that was never delivered to its addressee. Precisely because the *Letter to His Father* is not a work of fiction, it offers an illuminating instance of how the materials of life are transformed when they are turned into fiction.

The letter is based on a ghastly contradiction that seems quite out of control for the writer (unlike his fiction, where contradictions are held in fiercely artful control). Intended as a gesture of reconciliation and, in a peculiar way, as an expression of frustrated filial love, it is one of the most terrible indictments imaginable of a father by his son. The son repeatedly confesses his own weakness, his impotence, his abiding sense of guilt, but through anecdote and analysis he makes painfully clear how the father is responsible for the catastrophe of his son's character. This is a lifelong contest between hopeless unequals: ". . . we were so different and in our difference so dangerous to each other that if anyone had tried to calculate in advance how I, the slowly developing child, and you, the full-grown man, would stand to each other, he could have assumed that you would simply trample me underfoot so that nothing was left of me." The perception of the father is an infantile one that seems never to have been altered by the growth of little Franz to adult proportions: "Sometimes I imagine the map of the world spread out and you stretched diagonally across it. And I feel as if I could consider living in only those regions that either are not covered by you or are not within your reach."

To what extent does any of this reflect the general condition of the Jewish bourgeois family in the Austro-Hungarian empire around the turn of the century? (These are the same time and space, by the way, as those of Agnon's formative years, the Galician Agnon being just seven years Kafka's junior, though his greatest achievements would occur in the quarter-century after the death of his Czech counterpart.) Hermann Kafka, at least on the evidence of his son's letter, was an overbearing bully, a vulgarian, a monster of egotism, and in his modest way something of a sadist. Fortunately, none of these attributes can be referred to the sociology of the Jewish family. Kafka himself, however, does touch on certain notes of social generalization in the letter, and these demonstrate how the fateful peculiarities of individual character may be significantly reinforced by certain elements of shared cultural experience.

The senior Kafka, as part of the vast immigration from *shtetl* to city that took place in Central Europe at this time, was preeminently a self-made man, and the force of self-assertion of this successful new member of the urban mercantile class was of a piece with his penchant for domination within the family: "You had worked your way so far up by your own energies alone, and as a result you had unbounded confidence in your opinion." Hermann Kafka had jettisoned the pious practice of the world of his childhood, retaining only a kind of tenuous and intermittent nostalgia for it that was expressed in little more than perfunctory attendance at synagogue services four times a year. His son of course sensed the emptiness of this vestigial reflex of observance, and in the letter he imagines that, had the religious situation been different, "we might have found each other in Judaism."

Kafka himself stresses the typicality of the predicament: "The whole thing is, of course, no isolated phenomenon. It was much the same with a large section of this transitional generation of Jews, which had migrated from the still comparatively devout countryside to the cities." In the absence of authoritative tradition, the assertive father becomes an absolute arbitrary authority with all the force of the most punitive aspects of the God of tradition. (One sees here that Harold Fisch's argument about the erosion of faith and the obtrusion of Jewish mothers can easily be turned the other way to explain overbearing fathers.) Kafka summarizes this displacement in a single brief statement about his upbringing: "But for me as a child everything you called out at me was positively a heavenly commandment [*Himmelsgebot*]." The child, and the man-child after him, is forever at the foot of a towering Sinai, hearing the words hurled down at him in thunder, but the words frequently change, attach themselves to absurd or trivial objects, and are flagrantly violated by the very person who pronounces them.

In the *Letter to His Father*, all this amounts to an anguished account of the genesis of a neurosis, though, as I have just indicated, there is a sociological as well as a characterological component in the family situation that contributes to the inner crippling of the son. In Kafka's fiction, these same materials are transformed into haunting narrative explorations of the dynamics of living in families, living under political and spiritual constraint, living under the pressure of eternally elusive moral imperatives. That is why we read *The Trial, The Castle,* and the major short stories as great fictions of our dark times, not merely as the record of a cluster of obsessions. What the stories and novels do is to effect a symbolic reconfiguration of the family, the author using his own experience of the post-traditional Jewish family matrix as the means to represent existence under a strictly lawlike, perhaps lawless, authority. Let me try to illustrate this process by some brief comments on the three remarkable stories, all of them written between 1912 and 1914, that constitute a kind of unintended small trilogy on the fate of filiation: "The Judgment," "The Metamorphosis," and "In the Penal Colony."

"The Judgment" is the starkest, the most claus-

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tral, of these three grim tales. The power of the story derives precisely from the fact that all of reality has been stripped down to nothing more than the relation between the father and his son, Georg Bendermann. The only scene for action outside the dark rooms where the two Bendermanns live is the bridge from which Georg will fling himself at the end. There are only two other human figures, both of whom exist at the periphery of this world. One is a friend in Russia, who is variously a figment of Georg Bendermann's imagination, an alter ego, a bone of contention between father and son, and an alternative image of a son for Bendermann senior. The other figure in the background is Georg's putative fiancée.

Now, one of the recurrent topics of the *Letter to His Father* is Franz Kafka's inability to marry, which he attributes to his sense of devastating weakness vis-à-vis the powerful paterfamilias whose role he cannot hope to emulate, whose place he does not dare usurp. In the letter, this notion has the status of a symptom and the tonality of a tormented whine. Translated into the narrative invention of "The Judgment," the idea picks up archetypal force: the conflict between the two Bendermanns becomes the immemorial conflict between father and son in which every attempt of the son to take a sexual partner is construed as a betrayal, a thinly veiled project to displace the father and possess a surrogate of the mother. "Because . . . the nasty creature," thunders Bendermann *père*, referring to the fiancée, "lifted her skirts . . . you made up to her, and in order to make free with her undisturbed you have disgraced your mother's memory, betrayed your friend, and stuck your father in bed so he can't move."

The intuitive rightness of invented detail in this symbolic reconfiguration of the family is uncanny: the thigh wound laid bare by the father, which suggests both threatened castration and past prowess in battle; the fact that the father, through the strength of his claimed insight into the son's motives, suddenly grows "radiant" and is able to rise powerfully from bed. The final stroke of the story, a paternal death sentence that the son finds irresistible, is at once the most fantastic and the most symbolically resonant moment of the tale: it carries us back far beyond the Jewish bourgeois familial setting of the Kafkas of Prague into an archaic shadow world of absolute patriarchal authority where the self-assertive impulse of the young is crushed with savage force.

In "The Metamorphosis," the stroke of fantasy occurs at the very beginning, in the famous first sentence that announces Gregor Samsa's transformation into a gigantic insect. Everything thereafter in the novella follows with a harshly realistic logic from that initial fantastic fact. The sense of unworthiness, of rejection, that Kafka articulates in the *Letter to His Father* is startlingly objectified by this conversion of man into dung beetle—a pariah within the family, an object of embarrassment and loathing, and an insuperable obstacle to normal family existence.

The family as institution is more clearly the central focus of this story than of the other two I am considering. Although the trappings of contemporary urban life—the cramped apartment, the economic endeavors of Gregor and his father—are in evidence, this does not finally seem a "representation" of the early 20th-century bourgeois family but rather a narrative study of the delicate hydraulic system of the nuclear family as such. Here, too, we have the rivalry of force between father and son, in which as the son becomes weaker (wounded by an apple embedded in his carapace, he is like an "old invalid"), the father grows in strength, but that relationship is complicated by the crisscrossing lines of connection among all four members of the family. The crippled son futilely seeks refuge from the hostility of the father in the possibility of maternal solicitude; for a while, he imagines that his sister, who is the one given the task of nurturing him, is his secret ally, but this proves a delusion. In the end, it dawns on him that the only way he can serve the family is through his death.

This frightening tale, then, proves to have a kind of happy ending, whatever ironic inferences one might choose to draw about the conclusion. Gregor's death has a redemptive force: with the noisome giant bug at last out of the way, father, mother, and the suddenly blooming daughter can leave the foul atmosphere of their apartment-prison, walk out into the fresh air of spring, think again of action, renewal, and a clean, fresh place to live. To state in shorthand the distance that has been traversed from experience to art, the cramped psychic space of life in the family of Hermann Kafka has been transformed into a scapegoat story—and, alas, all too many families have their scapegoat—where the well-being of the whole is achieved at the cost of the unassimilable individual.

"In the Penal Colony" presents more complications of narrative elaboration than our two other stories, and I can hardly offer a serious interpretation of it in this rapid overview. Like so many Kafka texts, it has been read in very divergent ways: as a theological tale about the transition from the Old Dispensation to the New; as a political fable, uncannily prescient of the concentration-camp universe; as a psychological study of the insidious dialectic between sadism and masochism; and much more. The point I want to stress is that it is precisely through the symbolic reconfiguration of family experience that such a multiplicity of readings becomes possible—because the family, after all, is the matrix of our psychological lives, of our political, moral, and theological imaginings.

In contrast to both "The Judgment" and "The

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Metamorphosis," no literal family is present here. The setting is a kind of Devil's Island somewhere in the tropics, whose unique system of retribution is the brainchild of a now-deceased Old Commandant. The explorer who comes to witness the operation of the terrible torture machine, explained in such loving detail by the officer in charge of it, provides a zone of mediation and distancing absent in the other two stories: when he pushes off from the shore in his boat at the end, whipping away the outstretched hands of a soldier and a prisoner with a heavy knotted rope, we get a sense that he—and all of us with him—is literally putting behind him the nightmare world of the Old Commandant.

And yet, this distanced, fabulous world of perfectly programmed punishment is fraught with familial energies, energies one sees expressed on a much lower plane of signification in the *Letter to His Father*. The relationship between the Old Commandant and the officer is manifestly one of father and son, and the officer, in attempting, however futilely, to replicate the dead Commandant, is a kind of Hermann Kafka under the aspect of eternity, or at least, under the aspect of political morality. "My guiding principle is this," he tells the explorer, "guilt is never to be doubted." At the end of the story, the failed authoritative father will try to become the submissive son, stripping himself and placing his own body under the teeth of the dreadful Harrow.

The notion of divine commandment, *Himmelsgebot*, which was the young Franz Kafka's sense of his father's words, here undergoes a grotesque transmogrification, for this is a story about supposedly revelatory, indecipherable inscriptions. When the explorer confesses that he can't make out the labyrinthine tracings on the paper the officer shows him, the officer comments, "It's no calligraphy for schoolchildren. It needs to be studied." In the end, the machine that is to inscribe the injunction of justice on the body of the transgressor goes haywire, and the redemptive revelation of the language of the law turns into sheer mayhem.

The three stories, then, mark a course of growing elaboration and imaginative transformation of the familial materials: from the symbolic confessional mode of "The Judgment" to the fantasy and expiative ritual of "The Metamorphosis" to the invented exotic world of "In the Penal Colony," where the writer's personal awareness of an overpowering father and his perception of the displacement of tradition in his own home produce a fable that resonates in multiple registers, leading us to reflect on the failed project of perfect justice, the stubborn human need for punishment, the abuses of political authority, the historical transition from an era of harsh retribution, the breakdown of revelation, the threat of the indecipherable that subverts any confident use of language.

On the surface, it might seem that the case of the Hebrew writer, S. Y. Agnon, is incommensurate with that of Kafka, for Agnon's fictional world is so much more varied in topic, genre, and tone. In over sixty years of literary activity, Agnon produced cunningly artful imitations of pious tales, nostalgic reminiscences of his childhood, subtle psychological studies of contemporary types, panoramically realistic novels (though the realism is always tinctured with something else), satires, a whole spectrum of symbolic fiction, and also some dreamlike expressionistic stories that in fact have been compared with Kafka. But beneath this variety of literary kinds, one detects a family constellation only a little less obsessive than that encountered in Kafka. For Agnon, it is the looming figure of the mother rather than of the father that constantly overshadows the existence of the son.

In Agnon's case, we know lamentably little about the specific circumstances of the Czaczkes (his original family name) ménage in turn-of-the-century Buczacz, and considering the almost total neglect of serious literary biography by Hebrew scholarship, we are not likely to find out much before the last remaining witnesses will have vanished. But if the actual etiology of Agnon's imagination of the family may be inaccessible, the pattern articulated in his stories and novels is itself eloquent. In Agnon's world of origins, the mother reigns, the father is strangely recessive or actually absent. Occasionally, she is seen as a thinly veiled object of erotic yearning, like the mother of Yitzhak Kumer, the protagonist of *Just Yesterday* (1946, still untranslated)—he recalls her last lingering kiss and in that recollection recoils in guilt from attachment to another woman; or like the mother of Jacob Rechnitz in the symbolic novella "Betrothed" (1943), who is confused in her son's mind with the mother of his fiancée, whom in turn he eerily confounds with her own daughter.

A Simple Story (1935, now finally released in English*), the novel that is Agnon's masterpiece of psychological realism, offers the most clear-cut instance of domination by the mother as against attraction to the mother. Tzirel Hurvitz, a strong-willed, self-assured, grasping shopkeeper—a kind of fictional soul-sister to Hermann Kafka—possesses her son without ever having really nurtured him: she blocks his way to the poor cousin who is the woman he longs for, marries him off, out of social and economic calculation, to a woman he does not want, enlists him despite himself in the family business, and is ultimately responsible for his attempted escape into madness. (These are, let me note, strictly observant Jews, like Agnon's own family: one hardly needs Harold Fisch's thesis of the breakdown of traditional patriarchal author-

* Translated and with an Afterword by Hillel Halkin, Schocken, 246 pp., $14.95.

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ity to explain the baleful eminence in some writers of the Jewish mother.)

As the related fates of Hirshl Hurvitz in *A Simple Story* and Jacob Rechnitz in "Betrothed" suggest, powerful or powerfully desired mothers in Agnon tend to make weak sons, and the passivity, the debility, the impotence of Agnon's male figures have long been observed by critics. This kind of protagonist is prominent as early as "The Hill of Sand" (1920, but based on a story written in 1911, when Agnon was only twenty-three), with its touch-me-touch-me-not central character wandering through a labyrinth of castration symbols, and as late as the posthumously published novel *Shira* (1971), the story of a hopelessly blocked scholar alternately mothered by his prematurely aging wife and obsessed by his domineering, elusive, weirdly androgynous mistress. (Both these works are untranslated.)

The examples I have touched on illustrate how Agnon could spin, out of his own obsessive concern with mothers and sons, a long series of variations on a single psychological type, or, if we stress relationship rather than character in these fictions, a series of studies of the psychopathology of erotic life. Nor is the psychopathology of the erotic by any means limited to the overtly modernist phases of Agnon's writing, as we may infer from the disquieting story of an unconsummated marriage in "The Scribe's Legend" (1919), an ostensibly pious tale where the values of piety are ironically subverted from beginning to end. If, as I argued at the outset, a fictional representation is never just a case study, what is finally most arresting about Agnon's preoccupation with these family materials is his ability to address through them a range of large questions involving the cultural and spiritual predicaments of our century. This is evident, among the works I have already mentioned, in *Just Yesterday*, "Betrothed," and *Shira*, but I would like to follow a little more closely the move from family to culture and history in another text, the 1951 novella "Edo and Enam," which I think is one of Agnon's most original symbolic fictions.*

"Edo and Enam" is a story about the mystique of archeology and the quest after lost civilizations, and as such would not at first blush seem to have a great deal to do with families. A lonely scholar, Dr. Ginath, becomes famous by deciphering the hitherto unknown language of Edo and by publishing the beautiful Enamite hymns, said to stand as the missing link at the very dawn of human history. In the course of the story, it emerges that his source for both the language and the hymns is a somnambulistic woman named Gemulah who has been brought to Jerusalem as a wife from her exotic mountain homeland by Gabriel Gamzu, an antiquarian discoverer of rare books and manuscripts. The symbolism of this strange and evocative tale has been expounded all too many times in Hebrew criticism (and, often, in all too allegorical a manner). Rather than add my own voice to the chorus, I should like to comment on how the familial concerns define the lines of the symbolic picture, give it coherence and dimension.

The contemporary world of "Edo and Enam" is one of epidemic homelessness, where houses are simply unavailable, or are broken into, or are threatened with destruction. The theme of the destroyed house is pervasive in Agnon's fiction, but here it is correlated with the theme of disrupted conjugality. The paradigm is provided in an anecdote about a certain Günther and his bride who have been married for over a year but, unable to find an apartment, live in separate rented rooms, meet at bus stops and park benches, and, one concludes, have had no opportunity to consummate their union. Near the end of the story, we learn that the marriage between Gemulah and Gamzu is also unconsummated: "I am no married woman," Gemulah proclaims to Ginath when the two are discovered together by Gamzu, "ask him if he has ever beheld my naked flesh." Not even adultery is fulfilled: Ginath's relation to Gemulah, as much as she passionately longs for another order of intimacy, is the cool connection of self-interested amanuensis to informant. As for the Greifenbachs, the couple in whose home Ginath lives, there are no indications in the story about their conjugal arrangements, but, after ten years of marriage, their union remains without offspring. Finally, the narrator himself, though a husband and father, is separated from his wife and children during the main time sequence of the story and so participates, albeit temporarily, in the general pattern of disrupted conjugality.

What has happened, in short, is that the psychological theme of the weak son, erotically impaired by Oedipal guilt or by maternal domination, has been projected here onto a global scale and translated into non-psychological terms. It is a preeminent instance of what I referred to in the case of Kafka as the symbolic reconfiguration of family materials. The novella gives us a world of ineffectual males, either incapable of or unwilling to achieve conjugal consummation. In the thematic confrontation of modernity and the archaic, this universal slackening of the sexual bond serves as an apt image of a culture that has lost its élan, its sense of direction and purpose, its faith in its capacity for self-perpetuation.

Against this contemporary panorama of failed relations between the sexes, the story offers two ironically unattainable alternatives, one mythic and the other archaic. In the long dialogues between Gamzu and the narrator, mention is made a couple of times of the perfect conjunction between male and female in the heavenly constella-

* Both "Betrothed" and "Edo and Enam" are available in English (*Two Tales*, Schocken).

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tions, or, according to the Kabbalah, between the angels of the *Shekhinah*, the female aspect of the Godhead, and the angels of the *Kudsha Brikh Hu*, the male aspect of the Godhead. In a still more pointed antithesis to the flaccid males of the contemporary scene, Gemulah's archaic world is marked by a practice in which the suitor, emulating the biblical story of the seizure of the young women of the tribe of Benjamin, must forcibly "snatch" his bride from all rivals. The contrast between modern exhaustion or sterility and archaic vitality is emphatically clear.

"Edo and Enam," however, is more intriguingly ambiguous than my account of it so far would indicate. In her archaic realm, Gemulah is a nurturing mother (she nurses the injured Gamzu back to health when, blinded, he stumbles into her land); in contemporary Jerusalem, she is, to her husband, alternately an invalid daughter, a dangerous she-demon, an elusive object of desire. But the most devious ironic turn of the tale is that the whole vision of an archaic realm of vital origins proves to be illusory. The language of origins Gemulah speaks is revealed as a concoction, less language than idiolect, a project of secret intimacy shared solely by daughter and father, from which the exogamous suitor, the male outsider, Gamzu, is excluded.

At the heart of the archaic, then, we discover a kind of incestuous circularity that generates still another version of sexual exclusion. Language itself, instead of being anchored in history or, according to Gamzu's kabbalistic perspective, in the cosmos, is fictive; and the Oedipal aspiration of modern culture to return to the source can attain no more than the pseudo-archaic, the flirtation with an immemorial vitality proving to be a seduction by death.

What happens in the family, as Agnon perceives it, turns out to be homologous with what happens in culture, but in the larger arena the consequences seem more portentous. At the very end of the tale, the narrator tells us that after death, a writer's soul shines out in his work for anyone with eyes to "make use of its light." This presumably will be the case with Ginath's publications. But, remembering the ultimately fictive basis of Ginath's discoveries, the deceptive lunar luminosities with which they are associated, we may also recall an earlier remark by the narrator about the alluring light of the moon: "Happy is he who makes use of its light and comes to no harm."

THE family in the fiction of Saul Bellow unsettles the nice symmetry of our instances from Kafka and Agnon and so provides a salutary reminder that there are very different possibilities for turning perceptions of the family to literary purposes. The crucial distinction between Bellow and the two earlier writers is that he is chiefly interested in the extended family, not in the nuclear family. Although he began his career in the 40's with *Dangling Man* in a stark modernist mode (Dostoevsky-*cum*-Kafka), from the early 50's onward his novels and stories have encompassed not isolated individuals and overmastering parents but a welter of disparate, squabbling, ambivalently loving siblings, uncles and aunts, cousins near and distant.

This attraction to familial sprawl is inseparable from the zest, the panoramic sweep, and the element of formal looseness in Bellow's fiction. Nothing he has written exhibits the tightness, the inexorability of "In the Penal Colony," or "Edo and Enam," but it may well be that such formal rigor in fiction is dependent upon the imaginative concentration on the tight four-square zone of the nuclear family, and any reaching beyond those limits entails a certain untidiness. Bellow himself seems perfectly aware of the opposition in this regard between his work and that of the moderns. In his recent story "Cousins" (from which I will draw all my examples), the narrator, Ijah Brodsky, reports his ex-wife as having explained his fascination with collateral relatives in the following terms: "Her opinion was that through the cousins . . . I indulged my taste for the easier effects. I lacked true modern severity. Maybe she believed that I satisfied an artist's needs by visits to old galleries, walking through museums of beauty, happy with the charms of kinship, quite contented with painted relics, not tough enough for rapture in its strongest forms, not purified by nihilistic fire." In modernists like Kafka and Agnon, one indeed sees true modern severity, the purging fires of nihilism. Bellow at his best offers a more human warmth, and instead of the intensities of rapture, a compound of wry amusement, curiosity, puzzlement, compassion.

As fiction moves from the nuclear family to the larger network of relatives, the whole enterprise of symbolic reconfiguration is set aside. There is nothing symbolic about Bellow's cousins and aunts and uncles, no implication of multiple registers of meaning. The Jewish immigrant extended family draws him because it offers such a splendid sampling of human variety, and it is the extravagant particularity of individual character that engages him. But the simile Ijah Brodsky tries on for size, of visiting old galleries, undersells his own and his author's activity as a cousin-watcher, for the impulse is anthropological, in the older, philosophical sense of the term and therefore also ultimately metaphysical.

In the story "Cousins," the language of zoology and, in particular, of evolutionary theory abounds in the characterizations of the relatives: species, forms of life, extinct types, kinds of creatures, and so forth. What range of possibilities for humanity is manifest in these individual figures, known more or less intimately as members of the same family, belonging, as the narrator notes, "to the same genetic pool, with a certain difference in scale"? At one point, Brodsky is led to speculate—

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and it is a notion that underlies a good deal of Bellow's fiction—that each human being is born with something that deserves to be called an original self, not reducible to common denominators, not explicable through general patterns and external determinants. That would provide a metaphysical warrant for the cognitive seriousness of Bellow's scrutiny of disparate individuals in his fiction: "The seams open, the bonds dissolve, and the untenability of existence releases you back to the original self. Then you are free to look for real being under the debris of modern ideas, and in a magical trance, if you like, or with a lucidity altogether different from the lucidity of *approved* types of knowledge."

What does this enterprise of trying to fathom human variety through collateral relatives have to do with the Jewish family? It is a commonplace that in Western urban societies the extended family has long been in a state of dissolution, and it is obvious that such vestigial forms of it as persist are by no means limited to Jews. Nevertheless, Bellow has his Ijah Brodsky propose that in Jews the corrosive effects of modernization, the devastation of genocide, have produced a certain instinct of reversion to the pre-modern familial system: "Jewish consanguinity—a special phenomenon, an archaism of which the Jews, until the present century stopped them, were in the course of divesting themselves. The world as it was dissolving apparently collapsed on top of them, and the divestiture could not continue." It is hard to say whether statistical evidence could be mustered to support this assertion, but it does seem to have an intuitive rightness. The Jewish family, like other kinds of family, is inevitably flung out to all points of the compass in the centrifuge of contemporary life, yet one may detect surprising tugs back to the center, perhaps especially over the last decade, as we enter the second generation after that most terrible collapse of the modern world on the Jewish people.

In any case, the literary treatment of the family, as I have been arguing all along, has very little to do with statistics because the writer does not report social institutions but picks up hints from them which he imaginatively elaborates into a certain vision of human possibilities or, we might add, of impossibilities. When the terms the writer works with are drawn from the tightly looped psychosexual circuits of the nuclear family, what he does in one way or another is to derive from the family a defining model of relations between man and woman, strong and weak, old and young, man and God, individual and authority, nature and culture, present and past. I am not enough of a determinist to believe that everything the writer sees is distorted into the image of the family, but we do, after all, internalize our childhood families, and that predisposes us to see things in a certain way, to integrate them according to certain patterns, perhaps at times even to glimpse underlying principles that might otherwise escape us. The extended family, by contrast, as the example of Bellow suggests, offers immediate access to the endless heterogeneity of human types.

The bulging familial grab-bag of Bellow's story —hoodlum, lawyer, businessman, cabdriving philosopher, vulgarian, aesthete, introvert, female powerhouse—is something many of us experience in our own extended families. The fact that Bellow chooses to begin his catalogue with a criminal is instructive. For the law-abiding citizen, the criminal may often seem alien, someone who has stepped to the other side of a fatal dividing line; but the criminal in the family confronts us with kinship, reminds us that this, too, is a permutation of the human stuff we are made of and in these physical lineaments we are faced with hints of ourselves.

IF, as I have intimated, there is some complicated linkage between the nuclear family and symbolism, there would seem to be a connection between the extended family and what we call realism in fiction. This is not to suggest that the great realists deal only with the extended family (Zola often does, Dickens usually does not), but rather that they typically show the nuclear family to be implicated in larger familial and social contexts. By contrast, the creators of modern symbolic fiction conjure with an enclosed, imploded nuclear family.

The two modes of fiction, to be sure, rarely exist as pure entities and can combine in a variety of ways; but for our present purpose, I would define realism as the fictional invention, based on close observation, of people whose principal interest for us is the peculiar heft of their individuality, not their capacity to serve as conduits to some higher plane of signification. The generalizing impulse of fictional mimesis is in this case more implicit than explicit, operating mainly in that pondering of divergent human possibility to which we are invited. "Human absorption in faces, deeds, bodies, drew me toward metaphysics," Bellow has his Ijah Brodsky say.

The Jewish family is not exactly "portrayed" in Bellow's fiction, but it provides him a special opening for contemplating through particulars humanity at large. The realist and the symbolist, then, arrive at the threshold of metaphysics by very different routes. But it is there, finally, that they both bring their familial concerns, for what the imaginative writer seeks to uncover in the recesses of family life is not a sociological schema but the secret hints of meaning about what we are and where we are headed.

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Who's Afraid of Women's Studies?

Elizabeth Lilla

KENYON COLLEGE is a tiny liberal-arts school in rural Ohio. It is probably best known for its literary quarterly, the *Kenyon Review*, although it has also earned a fine reputation for its traditional curriculum and devotion to teaching. Kenyon is located in the town of Gambier (population 2,000), about an hour's drive from Columbus. Its proximity to farmlands and its remoteness from big-city life were deliberate: the school was originally an Episcopal seminary, back in the early 19th century, and it has retained much of that cloistered atmosphere. When I was a student there in the mid-70's, the school went by the nickname "The Magic Mountain," less because it was built on a hill than because of its seeming allergy to the worldly, the contemporary, and the trendy. Kenyon has long preached Aristotelian moderation, and practiced it—sometimes to a fault (it has often been accused of excessive blandness). The students tend to show a remarkable deference to authority. Fraternities, for example, at least in the years I was there, were thoughtful enough to schedule their annual Spring Riot in cooperation with school authorities, so that fire officials and local sheriffs could be on hand when the "spontaneous" bonfire of books and dorm furniture got under way.

Kenyon was probably one of the only non-Southern-fundamentalist colleges in the country to have passed through the 60's nearly unscathed. This was probably due to the self-selection the school's atmosphere engendered. Kenyon has always attracted the type of student who preferred a traditional education, in a culturally conservative setting. After all, these Midwest high-school students (Kenyon draws overwhelmingly from Ohio) could have chosen to attend nearby Denison or Oberlin, both of which have a more political and cosmopolitan atmosphere and a higher level of student activism. The Kenyon student seems to seek out and appreciate precisely the sort of philosophical detachment Kenyon offers.

So when I began hearing rumors last spring of student unrest, clashes between faculty and administration, the firing of the editors of a student newspaper, I couldn't quite believe this was happening at tranquil Kenyon College. What was going on there? Was it simply a case of the provinces, yet again, getting things late? Were the students at Kenyon, at a time when the rest of the country was blissfully riding a wave of conservatism, finally discovering the 60's?

A logical supposition on my part, but, as it happens, untrue. What was going on at Kenyon, I learned upon investigation, was a reversal of the usual scenario: it was the school's *administration* that was engaged in a thoroughgoing reform effort, while students and faculty members were urging maintenance of the status quo. The current unrest at Kenyon, then, is not a reaction to the conservatism prevailing on college campuses but another manifestation of it. The "establishment," on the other hand, traditionally a conserving, stabilizing force, is lobbying for swift and radical changes in the curriculum, indeed in the very ethos of the college. And just as the reformist spirit of the 60's latched on to various ideas that were in the air, so too does this reformist effort bear a standard of its age: in this case, a particular academic brand of radical feminism. The administration does not refer to it in these terms; it speaks mainly of women's studies and the new scholarship on women. But the fact is that women's studies comes in many forms, ranging from serious works of social history to overtly political ideology. At Kenyon, the latter predominates—and there the trouble begins.

THE introduction of women's studies into the Kenyon curriculum was undertaken by the college's president, Philip Jordan, shortly after his appointment in 1975. Jordan announced his intention at that time of making Kenyon a "first-rate modern institution." Since one could argue that the school was already first-rate academically, the operative word here would be "modern." To continue on Kenyon's traditional course might be noble or rewarding, but it would hardly win the school (or its new president) national attention. Perhaps, though, something could be added to make Kenyon College competitive with its more fashionable counterparts, to bring it closer to the cutting edge.

What is surely on the cutting edge today is women's studies. Both as a field of its own and as

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a cross-disciplinary enterprise, women's studies is firmly established in many top universities, and even more so in the lesser-rank colleges and junior colleges. Unlike so many other academic innovations of the past decade, it is not struggling against forces of obsolescence but is, on the contrary, only now really coming into its own. It has lost its special-interest status and has rapidly become "mainstreamed"—i.e., incorporated into the curriculum.

If President Jordan's moves in the direction of women's studies were fairly gradual—encouraging delegations of Kenyon faculty to attend the annual women's-studies conferences run by the Great Lakes College Association (GLCA) of which Kenyon is a member—his new provost, Jerry Irish, appointed in 1980, soon increased the momentum. He formed a Committee on Women and the Curriculum, appointed a Women's Academic Coordinator, and, finally, selected an associate provost who had a solid background in women's-studies development, a person who could share his assessment that "Kenyon, like our society, is sexist," and that both, therefore, are in need of reform.

Joan Straumanis was courted for the position of associate provost while she was still chairman of the philosophy department at Denison. She had been active in feminism and women's studies for some time, especially in developing women's studies at Denison and urging that it be made a requirement for graduation. During the evaluation process, Professor Straumanis was encouraged to meet with members of the Kenyon faculty and administration to discuss her views on how the college's curriculum could best be reformed. Once at Kenyon, she gave a lengthy interview to one of the school's newspapers. "A very important aspect of women's studies," she said, "is self-discovery and self-liberation . . . [students] begin to analyze their own lives in political terms as a natural result of a critical analysis of the distribution of power in society. . . . The study of the ways in which power is distributed, including its distribution by sex, may lead to political commitment."

Disturbing as these comments were, they were mild compared to statements Professor Straumanis had delivered outside of Kenyon. For example, in her concluding remarks to a conference on "The Structure of Knowledge: A Feminist Perspective," she announced that she would "close with some remarks on menstruation." "It is very consciousness-raising," she said, "to have your period during a conference like this one. . . . I don't know of any other conference where the speaker got up and said that she had her period. . . . For that and other reasons, women's studies will never die."

But more worrisome than the hiring of a new associate provost was the discovery that the college had submitted a grant proposal to the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) in spring 1982, asking for funds to set up a women's-studies program. The money never came through, but the college set up a women's-studies course in 1983 nonetheless. It was in any case through the informal circulation of a draft of this document that most faculty members learned for the first time of the path their school was to take. (They also discovered that their provost had been, at the time of his appointment, "charged with the responsibility to reform the curriculum in a manner that would make women's studies an integral part of the liberal arts at Kenyon.") "We are convinced," the draft declared, "that women's studies is necessary to 'humanize' the liberal arts at Kenyon, and that it is erroneous to speak of the 'humanities' without conscious and systematic studies of women." "The [women's-studies] course," it went on, "will serve as an introduction to the new scholarship on women . . . [it] will consider the issues of class, racism, and homophobia as well as sexism . . . [it will] consider the transformation needed to achieve a non-sexist society." (In the final version of the proposal, this last statement was modified to "will consider various views about whether changes are desirable.")

To many on the faculty, Kenyon's request for funds for a program designed to "develop a critical attitude toward claims made by the liberal-arts curriculum" was tantamount to requesting $50,000 from the federal government for the purpose of self-destruction. They questioned whether the reforms recommended in the NEH proposal constituted radical intellectual criticism or, more than that, indoctrination. The acting chairman of Kenyon's political-science department, Harry Clor, took part in a debate on the question that appeared in the pages of the student newspaper, the *Gambier Journal*. He insisted that "there is a vital distinction to be made between a search for knowledge which happens to have political consequences and a political training for the sake of achieving them." He also took issue with an assertion that had been made earlier by the provost that "all education is political" (a comment the provost is living to regret).

The other side of the case was argued by anthropology professor Rita Kipp, who supported the notion of humanizing education to make it more appealing to women. "Women's studies," she said, "asks how we can make the sciences equally engaging to men and women. Can we make scientific work less 'cold,' less 'hard'?" She faulted the traditional liberal-arts education for concentrating solely on the contributions of men, and for defining its terms on that basis. "Why," she asked, "is an oil painting a 'finer' art than quilting?" As to the charge that women's studies espouses an explicitly feminist viewpoint and is thus biased, she concurred, but argued that since *all* teaching is inherently biased, at least "when a class clearly knows a teacher's feminist bias, students have the ground from which to challenge the teacher's interpretations."

The *Gambier Journal* was increasingly becom-

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ing both the forum and the catalyst for debate on these issues. In October 1984 the newspaper sparked a particularly heated controversy with its publication of an editorial criticizing the provost for encouraging a feminist bias in the campus's main lecture series (which also happens to be one of the few forms of entertainment in Gambier). "Someone should inform Jerry Irish that we are at Kenyon for a liberal education, not a Liberal Indoctrination," the editorial began. "Students seeking a fair and balanced education have been completely and arbitrarily isolated from an entire side of the ideological spectrum."

The lecture series in question, held in the 1984-85 academic year, consisted of 21 events, nine of which focused explicitly on issues of feminism or homosexuality. These included three showings of the film *Not a Love Story*—a feminist critique of pornography—along with a lecture by the film's star, a former stripper. It also featured a lecture by the foremost feminist theologian and critic of America's "patriarchal power structure," Rosemary Radford Ruether, some of whose remarks were later printed in the *Journal*: "God/ess is both the ground of our embodied selves (matter) and also the endless new potential of our embodied selves (spirit), not as two, but as one and the same reality. God/ess does not confine us to stifled, dependent self, or uproot us into a spirit trip against the earth, but leads us to the converted center, the harmonization of self and body, self and other, self and world." The provost had written to the faculty, urging them to attend Dr. Ruether's lecture. Her work, he said, "generates hope for a just society while it analyzes the religious rationalization of discriminatory institutions."

The *Gambier Journal* editorial prompted a spate of letters to the newspaper, as well as indignant denials of responsibility on behalf of the provost. It also moved a previously shy and soft-spoken philosophy professor, Thomas Short, to write a forceful article entitled "Education and Indoctrination at Kenyon." Here he chronicled in great detail the "politicization that is taking place at Kenyon," and sought to defend the school's curriculum from the criticisms leveled by radical feminists. He concluded that "there is a concerted effort by the administration and some faculty to change the ethos of Kenyon College. *They* view this as a change from conservatism to a more progressive outlook. I view it as a change from a non-political curriculum to one that is politicized. . . . [A] change from liberal education to political indoctrination."

All these developments have led to a growing sense of strain on the Kenyon campus. Women faculty members, in particular, have had to deal with a host of subtle and not-so-subtle pressures. These have ranged from letters from the provost suggesting that they attend particular women's-studies conferences and summer seminars, to invitations to his home for four-hour-long brainstorming sessions on new ways of updating the Kenyon curriculum. The greatest pressure is felt by the young, untenured female faculty, for whom suggestions and requests by the provost obviously carry a good deal of weight.

Students too have been finding themselves under pressures to conform. One student, for example, who wrote a letter to the *Kenyon Collegian* criticizing the women's-studies course for its "implication that women are not capable of serious academic work," received a phone call ("of a fairly harassing nature") from the academic dean's secretary. One teacher tells of learning that a student in the women's-studies course was asked to defend her decision to dress in a noticeably feminine manner. Other students have complained of having their grades lowered if they fail to use the "he/she" form in their papers. (The provost makes a point of requiring that all papers for his courses be free of "exclusive language.") In certain literature classes, too, students reported being put very much on the defensive if they disagreed with their teacher's feminist interpretation of a work.

While incidents like these are mere irritants in the larger scheme of things, pressures in such areas as the hiring of faculty and the granting of tenure are far more serious, and pose long-term consequences. So great is the pressure on various departments to hire women, for example, that the administration recently experimented with distributing a booklet to all search committees entitled *Seeing and Evaluating People*. The booklet argues that since discrimination against women is historically determined as well as unconscious, imperceptible, and therefore rampant, one must keep a vigilant watch over one's instinctive "neural-perceptual-cognitive interpretations." Department members were told to read it over and then meet with members of the college's new Hiring Workshop on Gender and Minority Issues to discuss their feelings about the points it raises. (One department startled the committee by pointing out that these guidelines in effect advocate inaction, since they show the impossibility of transcending instinctive discrimination.)

But the goal at Kenyon, as has become clear over the past few years, is not simply to hire more women but to hire the right sort of women, which is to say, feminists. At least one non-feminist woman who was denied reappointment has been given to understand that it was her refusal to incorporate feminist materials into her courses which was responsible. That such an implicit policy exists is borne out by the curious fact that, when the administration had occasion to publicize a list of already existing Kenyon courses that focus on women or gender—namely, in its grant proposal to the NEH—it omitted mention of the college's "Women in Politics" course, one which has been offered intermittently by the political-science de-

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partment since the mid-70's—long before there were any pressures to include such material in the curriculum. One can only conclude that the reason it was left out (even though it has frequently been taught by a woman) is that the majority of the authors assigned are male, and that the course does not express a feminist viewpoint—or any political viewpoint, for that matter.

PRESIDENT JORDAN and Provost Irish would have had good reason to become increasingly worried about the rumors circulating in the outside—i.e., non-Gambier—world about Kenyon College. When in December 1984 the *Gambier Journal* reprinted, without comment, a syllabus for the women's-studies course, any outsider who might have seen it would have suddenly become aware of the distance Kenyon had traveled in recent years. There was a preponderance of feminist and lesbian authors and film-makers, the opening assignment was a role-playing exercise entitled "Households: A Simulation Game," and one-fifth of the total course grade could be earned by submitting a piece of needlework or doing a dance. But the administration could at least console itself that the circulation—even the grapevine circulation—of this campus newspaper was so small that no more than a handful of outsiders would be likely to see it.

Imagine the administration's horror, therefore, when it was discovered, two months later, that the editors of the *Journal* had sent 9,000 Kenyon alumni not just a standard subscription solicitation but a montage of articles and editorials critical of efforts to incorporate the feminist perspective into the Kenyon curriculum. And in the covering letter that accompanied the mailing, these potential donors to the college's forthcoming capital-fund drive were told that "a small minority of militant feminists, with the full support of the administration [are] attempt[ing] to politicize almost every aspect of the college."

Letters from shocked alumni began flowing in, some of them threatening to withhold their usual contribution until they received an explanation. Within a month, the editors were fired, after two turbulent and chaotic sessions before Kenyon's media board. The board, which is made up of students, faculty, and administration, found that the editors had "acted irresponsibly" in using the alumni labels granted them, and had "fail[ed] to give due consideration to the impact [their actions] would have on the *Gambier Journal*, other student organizations, and the college." Despite the fact that the administration disavowed any *direct* role in their firing, both the editors and other members of the Kenyon community felt otherwise. The editors promptly called a news conference to market the story to the local press, thus bringing still more publicity down on the administration's head. "Kenyon in Flap Over Ouster of Student Editors," proclaimed the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*. "1980's College Dispute Puts Radicals on Other Side of Fence," said the Mansfield, Ohio *News Journal*. "Misuse? Gambier Journal Co-Editor Challenges Firing by Board," read a headline in the Columbus *Citizen Journal*.

The administration tried to defend itself by claiming that the students had been dealt with justly by the school's media board. The editors for their part claimed that they had never really been given a chance to defend themselves, since no formal charges had ever been leveled against them. And indeed, the sheer variety and disparity of the grievances cited in the media board's final ruling would seem to bear this out. They ranged from an alleged infraction of the newspaper's constitution, to "alienating staff members," to general editorial incompetence. The evidence cited for the last category in particular would amuse a professional journalist: the board claimed that the paper's editorials reflected only the views of the editors and did not represent proportionately the entire student body; that the editors' ability to compose responses to the letters-to-the-editor gave them an unfair "last say"; that the editors turned down an unsolicited editorial; that staff members who did not agree with the political bent of the paper had no recourse but to put up with it or seek a position at one of the other student publications; and, finally, that the editors-in-chief "had a program for the next few issues."

As it turned out, simply firing the editors was not enough to ensure the demise of this increasingly adversarial newspaper. The staff incorporated themselves and severed all financial ties with the college, whereupon the administration denied the *Journal* the use of any school facilities, extending even to the distribution of copies in the dorms and dining halls. Aware of the fact that the paper was at this time looking for a new printer, the administration contacted one of the local printers (with whom the college did a good amount of business) and discouraged him from printing the *Journal*. The college also threatened to file a lawsuit against certain staff members over the use of the name the *Gambier Journal*.

Despite these hardships, the now independent *Gambier Journal* was still alive and kicking at the end of the 1984-85 school year, but many additional obstacles were strewn in its way. Since the newspaper's constitution stipulated that editors of the paper are to be elected by the staff, the media board met yet again (in closed session) and ruled that this meant that students who at any point in their four years at Kenyon had worked on the *Gambier Journal*—including disgruntled former staffers—were eligible to cast a vote in the forthcoming election of editors. The existing staff, meanwhile, many of whom had assisted in the drafting of their paper's constitution, insisted that only current staff members could elect their new editors. Thus it happened that on the evening of May 2, 1985, two separate elections took place for

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the next year's editors of the *Gambier Journal*. The result was nothing short of a Coca-Cola-style confusion. When members of the independent *Gambier Journal* looked in on the freshman "activities mart" this past fall, they saw their alter-editors standing behind a booth bearing the sign the *Gambier Journal* (though the sign was later changed to read the *Kenyon Journal*, most likely in acknowledgment that the original staff's incorporation gave them rights to that title). As of this writing, both papers are still coming out, though what will happen in the months ahead is anybody's guess.

One controversial item that will not be stirring up publicity this year is the core women's-studies course that gave rise to so much trouble. Kenyon now offers one quasi-women's-studies course in the guise of a course on the family, and half-a-dozen other departmental courses that focus on questions of gender. But the original women's-studies course could not be offered in 1985-86 for a more compelling reason than bad press: the enrollment would simply be too low.

When the course was first introduced in 1983-84 —amid a blaze of promotional publicity—only 32 out of a possible 1,400 students signed up. These students were taught by four faculty members, two per semester, each of whom received release-time for the additional preparation demanded by an interdisciplinary course. The second semester of that year, 29 students signed up. The following year, 1984-85, there were ten students during the first semester but by the second semester the number had dropped to seven (the same number, by the way, that chose to attend the equally well-publicized Rosemary Radford Ruether lecture). That kind of student-faculty ratio was unjustifiably high, even for a school like Kenyon, which prides itself on small classes and an average student-faculty ratio of 13 to 1. It was hard to decide, moreover, which was more embarrassing: the fact that so few students showed any interest in the first place, or the continuous drop in enrollment—which usually indicates the effect of word-of-mouth information about a course.

Nevertheless, the administration has reiterated its commitment to women's studies and its determination to resume the core course in 1986-87. As a sign of this commitment, it has moved the college's Women's Center—which at last count had twelve members—into new and larger quarters. And the Women's Faculty Caucus—whose formation was inspired in large part by the provost—has recently, with his blessing, petitioned the president to create a new administrative position, that of Director of Women's Academic Concerns. The job would entail a threefold function: to ensure the "integration of feminist views into the existing courses," to prevent "women's studies from being isolated in the curriculum," and, finally, to keep women's studies from being seen as "exclusively a faculty concern." As one woman faculty member candidly admitted, Kenyon's commitment to feminism "has taken on an entrenched character. The real question now," she said, "is whether the piece of the pie should *be* the pie."

As for the temporary suspension of women's studies, it is fair to say that the vast majority of students at Kenyon College couldn't care less. For the past few years now they have stood on the sidelines, politely watching their elders toy with the curriculum and engage in passionate debate on language policy. The one striking fact that has emerged from the controversy and the demoralization attending it is the students' overwhelming lack of interest in, or outright opposition to, their school's recent official commitment to radical change. How long an administration can continue waging a top-down campaign for reform in the face of such lack of support is an interesting question. That the students at Kenyon will come to share its passion, however, is very unlikely. One thing is certain: this was never *their* revolution.

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In the House of Glass

A Story

Ken Chowder

It was, after all, a remarkable piece of apparatus. Hagen grabbed the brass ring; tricklingly the flush began.

He made his way back to his chair and sat, like the foreigner he was, not in but on it. The wine had assisted in the business of making him tenuous, and so had the names. It was not a country where candles were lit, and as the faces around the table darkened and faded, their corresponding names smoothly slipped from Hagen's memory. The wine was a gulpable red and its name, perversely, was unforgettable: *Vavřinecké*.

He was a little unsteady here. He was forty-two, and this was less peculiar than it had been. The group was seven, and he was the odd note: he was the youngest, the American, and probably he was the drinker.

The others were artists, gathered together by his old friend Vlastimil; they were supposed to be Hagen's sources. They had been having a wonderful evening, roaring in a language that sounded like something being played backward, drinking herds of these liter bottles (*Vavřinecké*), eating and much appreciating the thin leathery meat, the purple cabbage, the raw and astonishingly hot green peppers.

The apartment too was raw, new and raw. It had taken Vlastimil and Ludmila years to get a place, since they couldn't get on the list of Social Cases—they had enough money and no children. For months Ludmila studied techniques involved in becoming a Social Case, but in the end it was sheer luck. The Lord Mayor had had such a fine time in a restaurant he promised the brilliant chef a flat for the chef's daughter; the daughter was set to move in, when it was discovered she was twelve. In the confusion there wasn't time to find a proper Social Case—a good solid Social Case was a rare commodity. Vlastimil and Ludmila were ecstatic about their apartment, which was a three-room concrete business with linoleum floors, a toilet but no bath, and a view of a ravaged landscape where the only things that grew were new apartment buildings.

As Hagen looked out, dusk was flushing the sky pink, providing a near match for the petunias overflowing window boxes on the balcony. Ludmila's white laundry hung beyond the petunias, but between the sheets he could make out the blank face of a fortress-style apartment building, the double of this one—and beyond that another, and then the edge of another, stepping like jackboots down the hill toward Prague.

The small bony man sitting on Hagen's left turned to him for the first time. He was of indeterminate later age, with straight and spectacularly white hair. "My name, to recall to you, is Červinka. Also a friend of Vlastimil. I think this is your first trip to Prague?" he asked. Hagen nodded. "Very beautiful," Červinka said, omitting the antecedent question. "So. You have seen the Charles Bridge, swans swimming under below, the Wenceslas Square with amusing clock, the Jewish cemetery, the great trees in Valdštejn's garden, the birthhouse of Franz Kafka?"

"Not Wallenstein's garden."

"Yes. Not necessary. But perhaps you have walked up the narrow street to the Castle and come down on stone stairs?"

"Other way around," Hagen said.

The old man's eyebrows, white wings slanted in a V, mimicked astonishment. "It is not usual," he said. "But acceptable." He held up his glass in salute. *Vavřinecké*. "How do you like the Czech wine?" Červinka asked.

"Very much," Hagen said. He considered adding another "Very much," because he was speaking a solemn truth, and because he enjoyed a little repetition as much as the next man. Twenty-five years before, his best painting teacher had told him: do the same thing fifty times in a row, and you end up in the Museum of Modern Art. It had not been a criticism.

"Very much," Hagen said.

The little man shrugged. "Of course you could say no other thing. You like the Czech white wine more than the red?"

"Other way around," Hagen said.

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Červinka was pleased. "Not usual. But acceptable."

"Highly acceptable," Hagen said, hoisting his glass and nodding at the old man, at the glass, nodding at the familiar state of drunkenness itself. *Vavřinecké.*

"It is good for a man to enjoy these things. In Czecho we do enjoy. What else have you enjoyed here?"

Hagen recalled his notes. "The patience of people on line," he said. "Patience is not a virtue of mine. So I've enjoyed standing on line just to be allowed into a supermarket."

"The Spořilov supermarket?"

"Yes."

"It is a very excellent one, I think."

Hagen did not have the criteria to judge Czech supermarkets, but, remembering the chocolate he'd bought there, so much like an expanded and impossibly cheap Chunky, he said "Yes" with great enthusiasm. "And other things," he said. "I like the way people say *Ahoy, ahoy* for hello, like a countryful of 19th-century sailors. I like the graffiti—sometimes you see the names of American cigarettes scrawled on walls. High decadence, for here. I enjoy riding on the overcrowded buses, and the smell there, of alcohol on women's breath." Hagen poured again.

The old man took off his glasses, wiped them on his shirt pocket, and replaced them on his nose. He seemed to look at Hagen for the first time. "You know, we do not mind the Americans so very much here," he said. "For obvious reasons. You are doing here what?"

"I'm a painter and a writer. I'm going to write about the arts here."

"Yes? And you change the names of the artists?"

"I write nonfiction," Hagen said, uncomfortably.

Červinka was plainly amused. "That is admirable. To write truth only. But we have a folk-saying here in Czecho. It is this: 'If you know, don't tell. If you tell, don't write. If you write, don't sign. If you sign, don't wonder.' "

"Right," Hagen said. "I understand. But I'm strictly avoiding politics. I'm interested in abstract art."

"I paint what you call abstract," Červinka said calmly. "But I think nothing is more political than abstractions. Because the vacuum does not exist in Czecho." He removed his glasses again and held them up, inspecting them. To Hagen it was clear the problem was darkness itself.

The old man replaced his glasses. On his nose were many small red stars, a network of burst blood vessels. That much was just visible. "You know this automobile of Czechoslovakia, the Skoda?" he asked, "It is the most selling auto here." He smiled briefly. "The word *Skoda.* It means 'shame.' " He closely watched Hagen, who could only nod as if he could confirm this translation. Červinka said, "In Czecho, we always make the reference."

"I'll keep that in mind."

"Please do not. Please forget it. This is what we like about the Americans."

It was going to be impossible to write the article. Probably he'd known this even before he'd come. So he had come to Czechoslovakia to not write an article. He was an inveterate modernist, and this coming silence was an appropriate form of technology. Not to mention, of course, a great relief. Here's to it. Down the veritable hatch.

Červinka slapped the table suddenly with his palm. "I will help you," he said. "You can use my words and my art."

"Really?" Hagen said. "But what will happen to you?"

"Perhaps nothing at all. Perhaps my daughter can make my support. Perhaps I will have luck with old friends. Perhaps the food in jail is better than it was. Many wonderful things are yet possible."

Hagen thought about the wonderful things. "How can your daughter help you?" he asked.

The lines on Červinka's face straightened suddenly with pride. "This is because my daughter is Milena Červinkova." He seemed to reflect on this fact for a second. "I believe you will meet my daughter," he said importantly.

"That will be nice."

"Yes," Červinka said. "As you will see." He emptied the bottle into Hagen's glass. "Possibly even she cannot help me if you write these things. But what is to do?"

Finally the *Vavřinecké* had got Hagen: he found himself pondering the principle of what was to do or not to do. It appeared that in Czechoslovkia this principle had been mastered long ago. The helpfulness of it was in some doubt, like all philosophies. It had the ring of Buddhism-in-the-socialist-bloc and then again it reminded Hagen of *Hamlet*, and finally of a graffito he'd seen—"Nietzsche says to be is to do; Lao-Tze says to do is to be; Frank Sinatra says doo-bee-doo-bee-doo...." He couldn't place the graffito. Maybe NYU.

An insect made a sudden appearance on the wooden table. It rounded the sharp edge and came up from below, then scuttled quickly along the length of the table, antennae waving wildly in the perception of fear.

"It's a kind of vermin," Červinka said, though he regarded the creature with some fondness. "Rather a beetle. It comes forth in the dark. You have such in America?"

"You bet," Hagen said. "They own substantial portions of New York City."

"Prague too," sighed the old man. "But," he said cheerfully, and ended his sentence. "What to do. What to do."

THE bus left Hagen at the bottom of Barrandov at noon exactly. He checked his watch and amused himself with the thought that no church bells would toll the hour. Perhaps

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it could be said that socialism was trying to silence time itself? And this was why new cars here were dead ringers for '57 Chevys and the men walked around wearing socks with clocks? And that Marxism was not the inevitable beneficiary of time, but its enemy? What nonsense he spouted, even internally. Still, he had shaved, and the mere reappearance of his big pink chin, shorn of blue shadow, gave him a feeling of cleanliness and life. This was certainly an illusion, but just the kind of illusion he sought to nurture.

Barrandov wasn't like Spořilov. Small streets coasted around the hill's knobby green anatomy, among immaculate gardens and high new houses. The hillside houses rested on stilts, and their architectural styles ran a contradictory gamut; Hagen was reminded most of all of Southern California. The higher up the hill he climbed, the more the place exuded the familiar flowery odor of wealth. Hagen was sweating; he often sweated around money.

He took the street called Slivenecka, as Červinka had told him to do. Near the crest of the hill, by a French chateau and a Mission-style ranch, the road forked, and both forks were labeled Slivenecka. When in doubt, Hagen went left, and in three houses came to the right number: 68. A three-story job in white stucco, its mansard roof gleaming under the sun. Luxuriant roses in hot hues lined up before the house like debutantes in chiffon. Beside a cherry tree a man in blue jeans stood atop a free-standing ladder. The cherries were abundant and superbly ripe, and the man was smiling to himself as he yanked them free and dropped them into a wicker basket. It was Červinka.

Hagen called a greeting. Červinka came down the ladder with an adroitness that seemed impossible. Unshaven, he looked slightly glazed and quite excited; Hagen knew that look well. Červinka held up his basket of cherries in triumph. "I make the blackbirds a great competition," he said. "Free trade, no restraints. The one who works hardest gets most cherries. The system pleases the blackbirds; they get most of the cherries. The system pleases me; I get some, and I don't need so many cherries."

"Capitalism doesn't always work that well," Hagen said.

"Not speaking of capitalism," Červinka said. "Speaking of cherries and blackbirds."

"You said Czechs were always making references."

"True. But we do not put our signatures in ink at the bottom of the page."

Červinka slid his wicker basket onto the kitchen counter. The room was empty but for three white cups, with echoes of coffee at bottom, reposing on saucers in the sink. The house was lovely, lovely for anywhere: light, spacious, with shimmering white walls and cool green trim. Here was the living room—Italian wicker furniture, upholstery in blue and white pinstripes, a long coffee table in blonde wood, Cartier-Bresson photos.

"Nice room," Hagen said, not mentioning the strange absence of track lighting and potted ferns.

They went up a flight of steps, then another. On the staircase walls hung a series of black-and-white photos. Hagen was caught by her halfway up the flight.

Pale eyes, later to become very blue, and dark hair, later deep black: elegance and distance. A woman stood on a train platform, wearing a feathered hat; behind her, Nazi soldiers hung in mid-goosestep. "You have seen it?" Červinka asked. "The one called *War Decorations*. Her best, I think."

In this one the same woman was waltzing in a black evening dress. Soft focus. The halo behind her lit stray hairs; the pursed lips of her painted mouth, almost palpably red, looked like a cupid's heart. "You know that film," Červinka said, nodding. "*She Laughs Last*. In American translation called *Kiss Me at Once*. This version of Cinderella. Yes?"

Hagen pulled his gaze off of the photo. "Actually, no." He was imagining holding this woman's calf, sliding a glass slipper onto her naked foot. Hagen liked women's feet, but he remembered how that story had terrified Maureen, the pale third of his three daughters, and he went on. Here the woman was smiling; the archaic smile, with the corners turned up just slightly, the kind of smile that says: I am not really happy at all.

At the head of the stairs was Červinka's atelier, a small white thing. He brought out his pictures, painterly color fields. The only odd thing was how tiny they were: smaller than Klee's magic squares. But how could Hagen tell him nobody painted tiny color fields? Hagen looked at twenty of them before being able to engage his critical faculties; just then the old man opened a bottle of wine. No cork; just plastic that hissed as the knife shaved it. Hagen's critical remark dissipated in his mind unsaid, leaving just one word: *petillant*, sparkling.

Červinka let out a one-syllable chuckle. "Look out here," he said, tapping the window. Hagen leaned and the old man poured into ceramic mugs.

He was looking down on another cherry tree freckled with bright fruit. Rows of roses, white and profuse. An ivied alley; in the alley a black car, gigantic.

"There's a car out there that looks like a Lincoln Continental," Hagen said.

"To be exact, it is a copy of a 1969 Chrysler New Yorker," Červinka said. "It is truthfully a Russian Zil 114."

"Your daughter's?" Hagen asked. Then he saw two soldiers. They were leaning idly against the hood, submachine guns casually slung over shoulders.

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Hagen's heat rose. "They're here for us," he said.

The old man peacefully held out a mug. "No, not for us," he said. "*Frankovka*," he added.

"What?"

"This wine. *Frankovka*. No, not for us. They arrive with the car, and the car belongs to my old friend Jiří. No. Pardon. The car belongs to the state, and my old friend Jiří is the servant of the state."

One of the soldiers seemed to be scratching his rifle. "In what capacity?" Hagen asked.

Červinka indicated a stack of newspapers on the floor beside the easel. "Card trick," he said coyly. "Pick one." Hagen slid a newspaper from the pile's middle. Červinka scanned the front page. "There," he said, stabbing a photo of three men in overcoats, arms around each other. Two of them waved. "He is the small man," Červinka said. The small man was dark, puff-chested, without hat or eyebrows. The small man did not wave; he stared like a lover wronged.

Noises from below: flushed toilet, door opening, slamming shut. "Ah," Červinka said. "Would you like now to go down and meet the Party Secretary at the home of his mistress?"

Hagen set down the mug. "I am an American journalist," he said slowly. "I should think that Party Secretary Kovařík would not be altogether pleased to meet me under these circumstances. I should think that protocol would certainly demand a different set of procedures."

"'I *should think*,'" Červinka echoed. "Suddenly you speak in a beautiful formality. My old friend Jiří appreciates always this formality."

One of the soldiers leaned over, checking his reflection in the glossy black paint of the hood. The soldier pushed his cap to a rakish angle, then with both hands pulled it snug and square. Hagen found a brutality in the gesture. "I don't want to go down there," Hagen said. "I only write about art."

"Think on this. You are an American journalist, as you say. You have nothing for fear. I perhaps do. My friend Jiří has warned me not to use him for shield."

Hagen's curiosity went by his fear. He knew about the fear but was mildly surprised to find himself curious about anything at all. "How do you know Kovařík, anyway?" he asked.

"We were four years classmates together," Červinka said. "In jail."

"Jail," Hagen said.

"For four years we shared the prison room. We played some chess." His voice was oddly affectionate. It was only then that Hagen realized Červinka had the trick or habit of seeming fond of everything. Perhaps it was part of the principle of What to Do?

"We played chess," Červinka said again. "Once each morning. Once each evening. Jiří was not able to refuse my sacrifices. He loved to take my pieces, no matter what he was cost." Červinka glanced outside again, down on roses and soldiers. "So I am careful," he said. "But in the *fin de partie* I do not lose to him. Never."

"In chess."

"In life," Červinka insisted. "After all. Jiří does not wish to make some problem for me. Four years is a long time. And of course my daughter is a very beautiful woman."

IN REAL LIFE the Party Secretary had eyebrows. Under sunlight they were a disappearing gray. The rest of his hair was colored a black so rich it was almost blue.

"He's a type, he's a type, he's a type," Kovařík was saying. "Our friend Josef Červinka. He lives to amuse himself, I think." He swished his white wine in little circles, a faint smile on his face, and then put the glass back on the white-painted iron table without drinking. He wore a white shirt and behind him was a wall of ivy and a soldier. Sun sparkled in the glasses of pale wine and Milena, black hair and blue eyes, wore a flowing yellow dress.

Hagen titled the painting *Vuillard With Ivy and Party Secretary*.

"And I do very well," Červinka said. He added something in Czech.

Milena spoke English for the first time. "'Almost as well,'" she translated, "'as my old friend Jiří.'" She smiled, more or less at Hagen; alone, it seemed, among Czech women, she had not tinted her hair a brazen blonde; and Hagen changed the painting's title to: *Milena*. Vuillard would have to forgive him. The title was *Milena*.

Kovařík reached over and wrapped his fingers around her bare wrist; his cufflinks were red stars. Milena and he exchanged an apparently blank look. When the Party Secretary turned to Hagen, he was smiling again. "There is no need for anger," he said pleasantly. "You are here to write about the art."

"That's right," Hagen said.

"It must be a great pleasure," Kovařík said. He placed his index finger on his cheekbone, and his tone hardened. "So you are here to write about the art, and you will simply write about the art."

"Absolutely," Hagen said.

"Best for us all," Kovařík said.

"That's right."

"The Party Secretary's wife," Milena said, "is said to be a wonderful cook. Did you know," she asked Hagen, "that the Party Secretary is married?"

Červinka alone smiled. "Excellent the *knedliky* she makes," he said.

Kovařík carried a great deal of tension in his jaws. He appeared sometimes to be chewing the inside of his cheeks.

The soldier by the ivy thoughtfully touched the stock of his rifle. Of course it was not likely that he spoke English.

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"Yes, one should always have a wife," Kovařík said. "Always one wife. It prevents the women from wanting to marry one. It is a necessary equipment. Have you a wife, Mr. Hagen?"

Milena rose and swept into the house.

"Just one," Hagen said.

"Hold on to your wife," Kovařík instructed.

"Yes sir," Hagen said.

After a minute Milena came out again carrying a glossy black vase and a pair of scissors. She set the vase on the table and went around the garden cutting the best white roses from the snowy multitude. Her snips seemed pointed.

"I'm interested in the new art of Prague," Hagen tried. The sun was in his eyes, but he was trying. "Modern work."

The look of confusion on the Party Secretary's face was short-lived. "Ah yes. The art of the present day. So you must go to visit the house of glass. There is such an exposition in Belvedér just now. Only the best and most new of the Czech glass."

"That sounds just perfect," Hagen said carefully.

Milena approached with her arms full of roses. She laid the white flowers on the white table with, if it was possible, some sadness. On the one hand, Hagen had put down an amount of wine by then; on the other, the soldiers had scared all hopes of true drunkenness out of him, and her actions may have been, after all, sad. White roses tumbled onto the white table.

Kovařík's voice rose to a sort of oratorical amiability. "I have told Mr. Hagen," he said to Milena and the rest of the garden, "that he must visit the exhibition of glass. This is a good idea?"

Milena didn't look at Hagen. "Very good," she said. "And I will accompany Mr. Hagen to the exhibition."

Hagen considered telling her his name was Andy, and then, all but instantaneously, decided that this had been one of the more suicidal ideas to come into his head in some time.

Party Secretary Kovařík regarded the woman and the roses and the cherry trees and perhaps the soldiers and the car; his eyes seemed to see exactly what they wanted to see, as if he had created this garden from atoms, and it was good. He said nothing, and a small breeze blew.

Červinka sipped. Hagen saw again the red patterns splashed on the skin of his nose and the white stubble emerging from his chin and cheeks in oddly-whorled patterns. Červinka smiled and said something in Czech to Kovařík.

Milena translated proudly. "My father says, 'Don't you think these brave soldiers would enjoy a good glass of *Rulandské Bílé*?' "

THE cab driver seemed glad to see Milena. He must have been: when he let them out in Prague he did an odd thing. He opened the trunk and pulled out a little wicker basket of russet chanterelles. He gave the basket to Milena; serenely she accepted, showing no surprise.

She did not seem surprised when the half-dozen people in the street all stared openly. Apparently this was very old news.

And she did not seem surprised to be with Hagen. He felt her electrically; but then it was her business to give off radiance, pass it impersonally on with her person, a moon giving the message that somewhere in the galaxy the sun is shining.

Hagen renounced the idea of speaking to her.

They walked into the cul-de-sac, toward a building quietly labeled *Dum Pànů Kunštàtu*. Milena said something to the boatlike woman afloat behind the desk; the woman smiled tenderly and pushed a button, and suddenly an English voice was blaring data. The building a perfect Romanesque. See the vaults, the walls. One room completed in. Another in. House owned by. In this room happened. Dungeon an example of.

Hearing the English, Milena smiled thinly, not exactly at him, and Hagen was visited by an unlikely thought: she's shy. He disdained it, came back to it. She clicked on hard heels through a door and into the next room; Hagen's Vibram soles squeaked after her. The voice droned on above them, colorless as facts. The next room was oddly dark, dreamlike. But in his dreams this woman would be receding in the distance, about to vanish by untold means. Milena stopped at a glass display case. As he came up he saw her face palely illuminated from the case below: her hair was pulled back, and all her bones were showing. Unwillingly he looked down at the art.

"What is this?" he said, speaking before thinking.

She often paused before saying anything, as if to give the words weight with a dreadful silence. "Glass," she said.

"But it's all broken."

"It's very old glass," she said. "From the happy time of Charles the Fourth. Before the Hapsburgs won Bohemia."

Case after case of pieces of glass: bits of green goblets, half a bland bowl, prettily-painted shards, an hypothesized ewer. "Of course it's lovely," he said. "Beautiful stuff. But the Party Secretary was talking about modern work."

She gave a little sigh and put her hands together as if about to pray: an almost Japanese gesture. Meekness. "I did not hear this," she said. "I was with the roses." She was clipping white roses in the garden—roses, soldiers, ivy, Vuillard: *Milena*. She said, "I think you are speaking of the exhibition in Belvedér. The new glass is there."

"That's actually what I'm interested in."

"It's a pity," she said. "This"—this smile was wistfulness; this little movement, her cool hand indicating the room with a tiny flick, was resigna-

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tion—"is more correct. The other is all things to drink from and to put in the flowers, but this one is Bohemia. It is truthfully Czecho."

In Czecho they always made the reference. "Why?" Hagen said. "Because everything is old and beautiful and smashed to pieces?"

Her shrug was a replica of her father's. "In some way," she said, and paused, and paused. "At other places," she said, "they throw out the broken glass. After the shattering, these things become dangerous. But here we hold everything." She placed her palm closely over her heart. "So we have a place like this." She lifted her chin, theatrical shorthand for pride. "But I will take you to the other exhibition if you like."

He couldn't place it: that quality in her face. It had something to do with the fact that she never quite looked at him. She presented her full face, the ghostly composition that the elements white skin, black hair, blue eyes always produce, but she focused elsewhere. The wall behind him, the collar of his shirt. And her focus was nowhere close to his as she said, "I have a question. What is your Christian name?"

After the shattering, things become dangerous. "Andy," Hagen said soberly.

SOMEONE must have seduced Hagen, for one fine morning he found himself lying in bed beside an arresting woman.

She touched his cheek tenderly, then rose and wrapped herself in a shiny white robe—silk, or else satin, Hagen wouldn't know. With both hands she pulled her hair from her neck, letting it pour over her shining robe, and sunshine flowed in the white room, and Hagen, eyes narrowed against the brightness, felt enveloped by a Lubitsch film, title forgotten. He did not know his lines. There were glasses on the twin bedside tables, empty on his side, half full (he was an optimist on occasion) on hers. He rolled over and drained it, and his stomach ceased fluttering.

He'd been a little miscast. He was depressive but not manic; in his wardrobe he'd long since accomplished an indolence that aptly represented the inner man; he had a correctly complacent wife and three daughters with small eyes, an overstuffed chair he occupied more often than he liked to admit, a diminishing interest in what he'd supposed was his life's work, and a growing preoccupation with the temperature of his toes. He was not a candidate for this scene. But this much was true: she'd been in the bathroom for ten minutes, yet he could still see her dressing gown swirl as she walked across the room, erect, poised, elegant.

So it was a dressing gown now, not just a bathrobe. What in God's name next?

He was thinking of a figurative work, though he did not do figurative work. Mostly white, modulations of off-white, a white dressing gown, possibly an indication of black hair. He was going to call it *Modernist Visited by the Ghost of Romanticism.*

Two places had been set at the table in the garden. Baskets of half-flutes, cheese, sausage, a pot of coffee, bowls of cherries. At one place was a brimming glass of red wine.

"You have servants?" Hagen asked her.

"No. My father has done this."

"So one place is for him?" Hagen asked, eyeing the wine.

"You," she said.

He took up the glass of wine. *Frankovka.* Something made him look up; Červinka was standing at the atelier window. He nodded and waved in papal fashion.

Stroboscopically Hagen saw her bedroom as they had entered it the night before. A carafe of chilled wine stood on a tray, two upside-down glasses beside it. In the bathroom was a little pile of clean towels—washcloth, hand towel, bath towel—and on the bed a neatly-folded pair of men's pajamas. Too small.

"Your father is very kind."

"Yes," she said, and Hagen wanted to ask: how kind?

HAGEN, as requested, put his hands into the air. The soldier softly slapped Hagen's armpits, ribs, pockets, thighs, calves, ankles. Briefly he put his hands between Hagen's legs.

"But he does it very sweetly," Cervinka said.

The soldier frisked Červinka but not Milena, then waved the Party Secretary into the garden. Kovařík saw Hagen and said, "Again" instead of hello. He stood a bottle of wine on the table and sat. "Would you care for a drink?" he asked Hagen.

"Please," Hagen said.

The Party Secretary did not move. He said something in Czech, Milena answered, the conversation was animated. Hagen looked steadily at the bottle of wine on the table, as if it might escape without his supervision. Kovařík, chewing his cheeks, rolled up a newspaper and held it as you would when about to teach a puppy a lesson. He began slapping his open palm with the paper. He was speaking in Czech, but three times Hagen heard a French word: *imbécilité, imbécilité, imbécilité.*

Kovařík pushed his chair back. "The Party Secretary has to go now," Milena said.

Kovařík left the bottle unopened on the table. The blackbirds and sparrows seemed to whistle more confidently from the cherry trees. "Would you like to try the other glass exhibition today?" Hagen asked her, his casualness elaborate.

"No. Not today."

Hagen could not help wondering, as Milena sat without blinking in the sunshine, what it was she kept looking at. Her face was apparently turned toward the spot where the Russian version

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of a Chrysler New Yorker had been, sitting as quietly among the ivy as a tiger yawning and sated in its cage.

HAGEN was sitting in the Barrandov restaurant by himself, and what he was trying to do was think about what a pretty place it was, what with real roses and red tablecloths and pink cloth napkins and postcard view of the Vltava, and what he *was* doing was remembering an argument he'd had with his wife Joan about whether a strong aesthetic sense was really only a justification for emotional sterility (he said no, she said yes, and he got angry because he thought she was right), which was odd, because they almost never argued, and what he was trying *not* to do was think about Milena. Hagen told the waiter in English that he was waiting for a friend, and meanwhile would like a bottle of red wine. The waiter replied in polite German, left him, and no bottle came.

It was the wrong friend. Červinka still hadn't shaved and behind his glasses was a dazzled look. Dazzled: exactly what did he mean by that? Červinka's eyes seemed particularly moist, almost dewy; they were shot with a tracery of blood, strokes of small lightning; they were bright, overbright.

Červinka sat down. "She cannot come to here," he said.

Hagen became aware of some of his organs, sources of the foul humors, in throb. This, now: this was too much. He had internalized his foolishness.

"She will meet you this afternoon. At the glass exhibition in Belvedér. It is in a part of the Castle."

"So the exhibition is in the Castle," Hagen said, and he thought he was thinking about the Castle until he said, "Why couldn't she come here?"

Červinka shrugged his standard shrug. "A very busy woman," he said. "With obligations."

"She's seeing Kovařík," Hagen said quickly.

Červinka's moony smile showed up. "Don't be the idiot," he said, but Hagen was already wiping his face with his napkin, crumpling it and throwing it on the table, even while thinking, *But I haven't eaten anything*. "One question," he said.

"Sit. Drink a glass of wine."

Hagen found he could ignore the glass of wine. Such was his backward and ludicrous heroism. "One question," he repeated. "Why are you doing this?"

Červinka didn't hesitate. "I still enjoy the chess with my old friend Jiří," he said. "And we are near now the *fin de partie*. But also. I thought also you would like it with her."

"I did like it," Hagen said. "Now I'm stuck with it."

"No no no. You are an American. Never stuck with it."

The lines on the old man's face were sliding, working independently of expression, under an agitation all their own. "You must really be a lunatic," Hagen said.

"We all must be," Červinka said. "There is no other way."

Hagen left him. He strode resolutely out of there, and it was only when his body was again swaddled in the hot blanket of sun that he realized: he didn't know when to meet her. By the time he got back inside Červinka had ordered a bottle of red wine and two glasses. Hagen sat. *Vavřinecké.*

HAGEN went early to the Castle. He knew now that, contrary to his literary assumption, it was not difficult to enter the Castle. There were several ways, none of them difficult, although all were uphill and he had not bothered with lunch, or come to think of it breakfast, and he had on the other hand bothered with some wine. He plodded, he could say, up stone steps. But of course you could not call each of these motions one plod. There was no noun that way. A plod. Applaud. Aplomb. He shook off the word and trudged, or walked laboriously, up the steps. Buildings began to sail slowly by on both sides, part of the Castle but not the Castle: the towers themselves were still in front of him. There were signs to galleries, signs to more galleries, but nothing telling him about Belvedér or glass.

He had a map. He did have a map. Or he had had a map. He did not have a map. Last time here he'd had a map; but he'd been with Vlastimil, who knew the Gothic cold. In the 13th century there had been a king named something much like Autocar the Second. Skoda.

Of course it had not been so hot in the 13th century. Hagen was sure the Middle Ages had been cold ages.

He found himself walking in the midst of a tour-bus-load of Japanese, all well-dressed, all happy. And their Nikons were happy too. Hagen was passing for Japanese. He was treading water among them, lifted up by them. In this way he would slip quietly out of the socialist bloc. He would learn brush painting and rake sand in a Shinto monastery.

A tanned young man, specimen of good health in white polo shirt, black rugby shorts, and Adidas, picked Hagen out and came right up to him, muttering and mumbling in secretive German, which meant he was a black-marketeer. "No thanks," Hagen said reflexively. "I don't want to change."

Then he had to think about his words, as always. He shook off these words too and asked where Belvedér was.

"There is not such a place," the black-marketeer said. "But I offer thirty crowns for the dollar."

In front of a restaurant a sign read, "Engaged: Wait a Moment Please" in four languages. Inside,

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the restaurant was almost empty. The bowtied maître d' approached Hagen flourishing his hands. Hagen said, "Could you please tell me where Belvedér is?"

"Lunch for one?" the maître d' answered.

"The exhibition of new glass," Hagen said.

"Step this way, please."

Hagen did not step this way. He stepped another way. The situation called for and brought on great delicacy. He watched his feet and followed them. He imagined it possible to say: he wobbled.

He felt he could feel her there somewhere. She was in the area, and he could feel it. Don't be the idiot. But he could. After the shattering, things become dangerous. *Imbécilité.* But he could.

Hagen saw a black car in leisurely cruise along the narrow street and made an immediate assumption. Cars were forbidden on this street, but this one glided along, parting the tourists. Hagen buried himself alive among another group of Japanese tourists, or perhaps the same group of Japanese tourists, and the car eased by.

There was a soldier at the wheel, but that was all Hagen saw. Conversely, it was entirely possible they hadn't seen him. Hagen went on walking around the Castle, bumbling was one word he could use; he was inextricably late, she had certainly left by now. The car would be back for him soon, but Hagen continued. That is, if you could call it continuing. Hagen was almost physically overpowered: the heat, the wine, the sense of loss.

The Zil came up from behind him and the first sign of it he had was its fat honk. He turned dumbly and beheld the faces of soldiers. The one driving was laughing; the other one had no true expression. They wore no caps, and Hagen saw no guns. The Zil swerved around Hagen and then bumped slowly down the cobbled street, taking with it the fading sound of the soldier's laugh.

Hagen had been about to put his hands up; his mind now allowed them to hang freely. He was free, after all. He was free, he was wretched, and for a second Hagen had to restrain himself from running, like the idiot, after the big black car.

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Books in Review

Bearing Arms

CITIZENS AND SOLDIERS: THE DILEMMAS OF MILITARY SERVICE. By ELIOT A. COHEN. *Cornell University Press. 227 pp. $22.50.*

Reviewed by PHILIP GOLD

THIRTEEN years ago, the United States became the only great power in history to attempt to meet its global military commitments entirely through the use of citizen volunteers. At the time, abandoning conscription was both politically expedient and easily rationalized as a measure of national healing. Vietnam was winding down; conscription was horrendously unpopular; the Supreme Court had extended conscientious-objector rights to virtually the entire draft-age male population; and, in any event, we were not about to go to war again for a while. Indeed, if any notion of that not-so-halcyon year of 1973 commanded virtual unanimity, it was that the draft had to go.

For thirteen years, the United States has raised its military manpower entirely by voluntary, i.e., market-mechanism, means. After a few rough years in the 70's, the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) has evolved into the finest peacetime military this country has ever fielded—the finest, that is, when measured by every standard but those of strategy and combat. As currently structured, the AVF is too large and awkward for small contingencies, too small for large ones, increasingly incapable even of manning and servicing all the new weapons now entering the inventory, and woefully lacking in the ready manpower (both active and reserve) necessary to prevail in the "come-as-you-are" wars all too possible in Europe, Korea, and Southwest Asia.

In short, whatever its virtues (and they are many), the AVF is an utterly inadequate instrument with which to confront the conventional power of the Soviet Union and its surrogates. Unless the United States wishes to continue indulging the AVF fantasy, only three alternatives exist: unilateral abrogation of our commitments; returning conventional forces to their 1950's "nuclear trip-wire" status; or renewed peacetime conscription. If the first alternative is unthinkable, and the second imprudent, we are left with the third.

Yet today conscription as a political issue ranks in importance somewhere between saving the whales and reviving the Confederacy. An occasional general mentions it; he is quickly disavowed by his civilian superiors. An occasional Senator advocates it; the issue dies in committee. An occasional defense analyst or journalist notes that the military-age cohort is shrinking yearly, or that American planning is far too dependent on part-time reserves, or that the AVF is disproportionately non-middle-class-white; he is attacked by both the Pentagon and the Left. And, it is safe to predict, were any President even to mention the possibility of renewed conscription, it would trigger less of a reasoned national debate than a cacophony of competing self-righteous hysterias.

And herein lies the immense potential value of Eliot Cohen's *Citizens and Soldiers*. He has provided us with a book well ahead of its time, a superbly crafted study of military service which must be viewed not only as fine political science but also as an invaluable starting point for future debate. *Citizens and Soldiers* is neither a narrow "think-tank" analysis, replete with the jargon and statistics of manpower management, nor a transient polemic with some panacea to tout. It is, instead, a measured and judicious assessment of the whole problem of military service in democracies: an assessment which also hints at possible new forms American conscription could take, should it be reintroduced.

According to Cohen, citizen military service is neither a narrowly military nor (as the libertarians would argue) a primarily economic problem; the military does not simply help itself to people's bodies, and conscription is not just an inequitable "tax in kind," levied on some but not others. Rather, military service is fundamentally a political and institutional affair. A nation's manner of raising armies must be both militarily effective and politically acceptable.

Cohen distinguishes three basic types of service. In a militia system, virtually everyone incurs a decades-long obligation but serves only for brief training periods. This system is ideally suited to countries such as Switzerland, whose forces exist to fulfill the sacrosanct mission of home defense. Alternatively, in a cadre-conscript system, a small professional officer corps manages a steady flow of active-duty recruits, who may or may not enter the reserves upon discharge. As practiced in France and West Germany, this system is ideal for maintaining standing forces ready to fight on short notice in defense of the homeland. Finally, a military system may be expansible, designed less for combat than for rapid growth when needed, as was the German *Reichswehr* between 1919 and 1933. Also, nations may combine parts of these systems to meet their own needs. Israel, for example, maintains a combination militia and cadre-conscript system.

These are the basic options. But, notes Cohen, the United States, alone among major powers, has failed to develop a durable, palatable, and effective system of recruitment and service. Almost everything except for universal training and service has been tried: pure voluntarism, selective service, lottery. Further, the present American military is an odd mélange of structures: designed as an expansible force (for World War II-style mobilizations), but also increasingly

PHILIP GOLD *is a professor of history at Georgetown University and the author of* Evasions: The American Way of Military Service.

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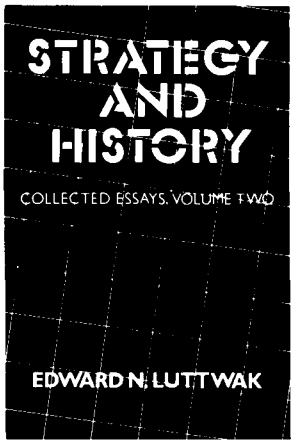

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Edward N. Luttwak is research professor and senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University. He is a consultant to the Defense and State Departments on international affairs and national security policy and the author of a number of books and articles on strategic and military affairs, including *Strategy and Politics* and *The Grand Strategy of the Soviet Union.*

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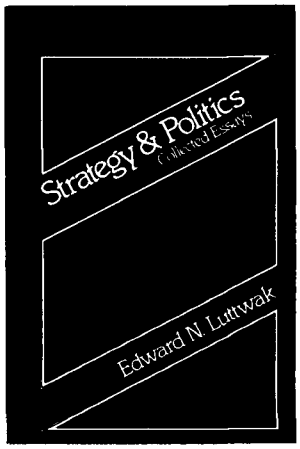

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pressed into a cadre-conscript (or volunteer) mode as global threats multiply and warning times diminish.

For this confusion of both structure and service, Cohen adduces two reasons. First, global powers must prepare for and wage two very different types of war: total conflict, which demands mass conscription, and lesser, often controversial, wars best fought by long-service professionals. For both military and political reasons, conscripts had no business fighting in Korea and Vietnam; their use virtually guaranteed public disaffection and ultimate opposition, even among those who might have countenanced those wars had they been fought by professionals.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, Cohen sees a fundamental conflict in the cultural and ethical values through which Americans perceive military service. Liberalism, with its abhorrence of compulsion, clashes with an egalitarianism which demands that risk and sacrifice be shared as evenly as possible. Old notions of civic virtue, of military service as an inalienable obligation of citizenship, collide with the imperatives of military and (in the 20th century) industrial efficiency. Hallowed notions that those who benefit most from citizenship should also defend it vie with the common-sense proposition that some people are more valuable away from the fight.

In *Citizens and Soldiers*, Cohen offers no master plan for either an efficient or an equitable system of military service, conscripted or voluntary. He does, however, hint at a possible compromise, the revival of what he calls "intermediate obligation"—the notion that a citizen may be conscripted for some uses but not for others. Historically, the concept of citizen obligation has been tied to only one use: home defense. Conscription has been accepted in most democratic societies precisely because the conscripts (and the nation) know that draftees will not be employed on dubious ventures. But alone of modern democracies, the United States places no legal or customary limitation on the purposes for which conscripts may be used, and this is a sure prescription for domestic unrest.

Why could not a new peacetime American draft restrict draftees to American territory, save upon declaration of war or other congressional authorization? America's first peacetime draft (1940) kept draftees within the Western hemisphere. The precedent exists in American law, as well as in the military history of the Western world, which amply documents the fact that the use of draftees for unclear purposes constitutes an invitation to both military and political disaster.

Citizens and Soldiers, then, provides both a useful survey of the varieties of military service available to democracies and a sensitive exposition of traditional American ambiguities toward the problem. The book, however, is not without its limits. Cohen never addresses the problem of conscientious objection, the anti-universe of obligation. Nor does he deal with the nature of the Soviet and surrogate threat. Finally, I found a bit jarring his confession that he had joined the Army Reserve "largely because [his] students insistently posed questions [he] couldn't answer." Admirable, to be sure, but also perhaps a bit too academic a reason. These minor faults notwithstanding, *Citizens and Soldiers* is a first-rate book which may yet turn into a national asset, should Washington ever again muster the courage to ask the American people to bear arms.

"Sir Oracle"

SELECTED LETTERS OF CYRUS ADLER. Edited by IRA ROBINSON. *Jewish Publication Society. Vol. 1, 403 pp. Vol. 2, 398 pp. $50.00.*

Reviewed by JONATHAN D. SARNA

When Cyrus Adler graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, his classmates, who considered him a trifle arrogant, pictured him as a question mark. "I am Sir Oracle," the *Class Record* said in describing him, "when I ope my lips let no dog bark." Adler was surprised by the characterization (he included it in his memoirs); but those who knew him were not. The question mark and the charges of aloof arrogance have shrouded his image to this day.

Adler (1863-1940) was American Jewry's first great "scholar-doer." Born in Van Buren, Arkansas and raised in the aristocratic atmosphere of Philadelphia's venerable Sephardi synagogue, Mikveh Israel, he received as fine a Jewish and secular education as was available to an American Jew of his day, and revealed an early streak of brilliance. At the University of Pennsylvania he earned the sobriquet "Cyrus Aristotle Adler"; moving on to Johns Hopkins he became, he later boasted, the first American to earn a doctorate in Semitics at an American university. He subsequently taught at Hopkins, rising to the level of associate professor, and then resigned to work full-time at the Smithsonian Institution, where in 1905 he became Assistant Secretary—one of the highest appointive political offices occupied to that time by an American Jew.

In 1908 Adler left this position to assume the presidency of Dropsie College in Philadelphia, a then newly founded Jewish-sponsored postgraduate college for "Hebrew and Cognate Studies." Within a decade, he would also be presiding over the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Kehillah (the organized Jewish community) of Philadelphia, and the Jewish Welfare Board, and exercising considerable behind-the-scenes control over the American Jewish Historical Society, the American Jewish Committee, and the Jewish Publication Society.

Adler, as a contemporary put it, possessed "the air of being a scholar without being either reclusive or peculiar." He also had boundless energy, unusual administrative talents, and *yichus*, good family connections. He thus could shuttle easily among scholars and businessmen, Jews and non-Jews, Orthodox and Reform. When men like the

JONATHAN D. SARNA, *associate professor of American Jewish history at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, is the author of the forthcoming* The American Jewish Experience *(Holmes & Meier).*

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great Jewish philanthropist Jacob Schiff needed something done, Adler was the man they knew they could rely on.

That Adler was a great administrator cannot be doubted. The question mark surrounding his name has to do with whether, in the end, he amounted to more than that. The Zionist leader Louis Lipsky, embittered by Adler's lifelong criticism of his movement, expressed doubts on that score:

> He resisted innovation. He refused to lend himself to any form of action in which overemphasis *or sharp distinction or controversy* was an ingredient. He felt that in any change in Jewish forms basic principles would be disturbed and washed away in time. He believed in ceremony and the habitual and hesitated to acquire new habits and to direct his life into new paths for fear that he might lose his way. He was old when he was young . . . [h]e was a conservator, not a creator.

Herbert Parzen, a historian of Conservative Judaism, judges Adler even more severely. Conceding that he was "a pioneer who shared in the establishment and shaping of the decisive institutions in the Jewish community," Parzen nevertheless dismisses his leadership of the Jewish Theological Seminary and the Conservative movement as "less than beneficent, and hardly adequate." In recent years this has been very much the scholarly consensus.

WITH the publication of the long-awaited collection of Adler's letters, a reappraisal of these sharp judgments is in order. Professor Ira Robinson of Concordia University, rescuing the project from two decades of neglect, read through more than 10,000 letters scattered across twelve repositories or held in private hands. (This by no means exhausts Adler's correspondence, since hundreds of letters Robinson did not see are to be found in the recently opened papers of the Jewish Publication Society.) From these he has selected about 600, all of them by Adler rather than to Adler, and most of them letters of general interest that also shed light on "as many facets as possible of Cyrus Adler's varied career." Dreary routine letters, even if they would more accurately reflect Adler's day-to-day activities, have been omitted, as, less justifiably, have been letters reflecting Adler's darker side.

In his correspondence as in his general comportment, Adler displayed a greater degree of stiff formality than is immediately apparent here. Had salutations been printed along with texts, it would have become clear that he was on first-name terms with no more than a handful of people. The rest he addressed formally by title, and he expected them to address him by title in return—preferably as "Doctor Adler," with the "Doctor" spelled out in full. But whatever they do or do not show us of Adler the person, the letters in this revealing and historically invaluable collection do disclose a man of far greater depth, commitment, and insight than his critics have led us to expect. Indeed, one comes away from these volumes filled with new respect not just for Adler but for a whole generation of Jewish leaders, now forgotten or maligned, who whatever their foibles clearly gave far more of themselves than has been appreciated to create the communal institutions that today's American Jews take for granted.

NO BRIEF summary can do justice to the wide range of issues covered in these volumes. Robinson's selection includes letters dealing with everything from Jewish polygamy in Turkey (which Adler wanted to see stamped out) to Jewish scholarship in America (which he tried in every way to encourage); from intra-Jewish relations to Jewish-Christian relations; from academic freedom to religious freedom; from the problem of the Ethiopian Falashas to the anti-Semitism of Henry Ford. There is plenty of good old-fashioned American patriotism here, abundant concern for morality and religion, and a healthy fear of extremism (in all things, Adler preferred the "sane and conservative" way).

History has proved Adler wrong in some of his views, particularly in his opposition to a Jewish state, but he was also right more often than has been acknowledged. In 1933, for example, he privately criticized both Jews and non-Jews for "underrating" Hitler. "My private advice to any Jew in America who has relatives in Germany," he wrote, "would be, if at all possible, for him to arrange to get them out. . . . I believe the best thing that can happen for the Jews of Germany if at all possible would be to take every last one of them out."

It emerges from these letters that Adler's greatest and most enduring contribution was his continuous stress on the importance of Jewish learning at all levels: from the highest and most profound scholarship to widespread adult Jewish education to the education of Jewish children. He ranked this at the top of his own list of community priorities, devoting to it the bulk of his time, and he also insisted that other priorities should follow as offshoots from a common root. Naomi Cohen, in a characteristically perceptive introduction to these volumes, cites an address in which Adler argued specifically that "[upon] the organization of Jewish education and learning in this country . . . the religion and standing of our people rests, more than upon any other factor." Where others looked to defense organizations to guarantee American Jewry's survival, he believed that the community depended upon cultural creativity and the quality of Jewish life. He also saw in Jewish learning a platform on which all Jews, no matter how divided they may have been on other issues, could unite.

None of this was original with Adler, to be sure. As Murray Friedman and Maxwell Whiteman have pointed out in *Jewish Life in Philadelphia* (1984), Adler was part of a larger group of men known as the "Philadelphia Group" who played a formative role in shaping the great Jewish cultural institutions that arose in the United States during the decades immediately prior to World War I. It was Adler, however, who carried the Philadelphia Group's ideals the farthest. He, more than anyone else, was responsible for maintaining the institutions that they pioneered, and it was his

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vision that inspired others to carry on where he left off. Had it not been for his tireless efforts, the Jewish cultural renaissance which he foresaw back in the 1890's, and which has been brought more fully to fruition in our own day, might have died aborning.

Much about Cyrus Adler still remains bafflingly enigmatic. He was a private man who rarely shared his intimate thoughts with correspondents. Public letters do not do justice to the complexity of his mind, much less to those innermost tensions that he grappled with alone in his study. They certainly do not substitute for the full-scale biography that he so richly deserves. Still, with the appearance of these volumes the question mark surrounding Adler's name begins to yield some of its mystery. Better than before, we now know why Adler's classmates dubbed him "Sir Oracle," and why to a very large extent they were right.

The New Neutralism

PEACE AND SURVIVAL: WEST GERMANY, THE PEACE MOVEMENT, AND EUROPEAN SECURITY. By DAVID GRESS. *Hoover. 266 pp. $15.95.*

Reviewed by JEFFREY HERF

IN THIS period of relative calm after the storm over the installing of cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe, "continuity" is the key word for many observers of West German politics. The Greens, it is said, remain in an electoral ghetto. Although the Social Democrats (SPD) indulge in the luxury of political opposition to attack the Reagan administration's Strategic Defense Initiative and to propose chemical-free zones with the East German Communists, once they were to regain office they would sing a different tune. Meanwhile (this line continues), the West German conservatives, heirs to Konrad Adenauer, are governing, reminding West Germans that having to live with the Soviet Union does not require describing it as a "security partner." Nothing, in other words, has really changed.

David Gress, in his cogently argued and fiercely independent analysis, *Peace and Survival*, dissents from this view, explaining what *has* changed in West German politics and why these changes matter for the defense of Western Europe. Gress documents a gradual shift away from the basic axioms of Adenauer's foreign policy: reunification with freedom; integration into the Western alliance; no flirting with neutralism; and no recognition of the Communist regime in Eastern Germany. In the 1950's, no one in the West German political elite argued that the divi-

JEFFREY HERF, *a new contributor, is a research associate at Harvard's Center for International Affairs. He is working on a book about West German neutralism and the Euromissile crisis.*

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sion of Germany was anything other than a source of tension. In the 1980's it is "almost impossible" to find West German leaders who still hold that view. Whereas in the 1950's these same leaders located responsibility for the division in the intolerable Soviet domination of East Germany, by the 1980's an "ideology of Europe" has developed that faults both superpowers more or less equally.

According to Gress, resignation to the fact of Soviet domination began in the Social Democratic party, acquired conceptual coherence after the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, gained momentum during the "Great Coalition" of Christian Democrats and Social Democrats from 1966 to 1969, and was established as government policy in 1969 when Willy Brandt became Chancellor. Brandt's *Ostpolitik*, combined with the resurgence of the intellectual and cultural Left, then coalesced into a distinctive neoneutralist ideology which became a driving force behind the peace movement of the early 1980's.

Gress's analysis of the evolution of Social Democratic views is complex and nuanced. Although in the early 50's the SPD was explicitly neutralist, anti-NATO, anti-nuclear, and often anti-defense, it was nevertheless still not resigned to Communist domination over East Germany. On the contrary, until the Berlin Wall was built in 1961, the SPD maintained an underground organization in East Germany and claimed that it, not the Communist party, was the real representative of East German workers. The anti-NATO Social Democrats were thus vigorous anti-Communists who shared Adenauer's conviction that a genuine European peace required respect for human rights in East Germany and Eastern Europe. Where they disagreed with him was over the nature of the Soviet military threat to Western Europe, and on the issue of whether integration with the West would aid or impede German reunification. The fundamental change, according to Gress, was the evolution of this "uncompromising democratic nationalism of the 1950's to the much more uncertain attitude regarding the national issue evident in [the] *Ostpolitik*" of the late 1960's.

Willy Brandt and his foreign-policy adviser Egon Bahr brilliantly obscured (perhaps even to themselves) the conservative and highly traditional essence of détente as conceived by Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger. Brandt's was a policy of dealing with governments rather than "peoples," whose effect was to codify the Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. Aspirations for democratic socialism, as in East Germany, were now seen as themselves a "destabilizing" factor in East-West relations. This last view surfaced during the rise and repression of Solidarity in Poland, when Egon Bahr went so far as to say that for the sake of peace the Poles should be willing to sacrifice their national aspirations just as the Germans already had done. Even more amazing, while pursuing this policy Brandt won the ideological and moral high ground for the Social Democrats by depicting the conservative opposition as both unrealistic and dangerous in its desire to "revive the cold war."

In Gress's judgment, the West German shift "from resistance to appeasement as the preferred way to deal with the facts of Soviet power and intransigence" represented a triumph for Soviet foreign policy. *Wandel durch Annäherung*, "change through rapprochement" (in Bahr's words), meant that political change for the better in Eastern Europe would come only by reassuring the Soviet Union over its "legitimate security concerns." "Ideology," i.e., anti-Communism, was relegated to the past, its place taken by a new ideology, neoneutralism: the blurring of distinctions between East and West and the view that the main threat to Europe lay in "the logic of the blocs" and the actions of "both superpowers."

Neoneutralism in this sense was adopted by the Brandt wing of the SPD—as opposed to the strongly pro-NATO wing led by Helmut Schmidt—and led to "the abandonment of the Atlanticist line by the SPD," in Gress's view the "most dramatic and portentous development in West German politics since the inauguration of the *Ostpolitik* of the social-liberal coalition in 1969." Gress presents statements by leading SPD politicians and intellectuals loyal to Helmut Schmidt which make clear how deeply concerned they are about this tendency and which show incidentally that German neoneutralism is not just some nightmare of Americans.

West Germany does not suffer from analytical neglect these days, but David Gress in this book demonstrates the importance of examining contemporary politics with some historical, cultural, and philosophical perspective. He thereby helps us to understand as well the seeming "continuity" of West German foreign policy since 1982. Given the strength of neoneutralism in the SPD, only a government dedicated to Adenauer's "simplistic" ideological verities of the 1950's could sustain the dual commitment to defense and diplomacy that has characterized Helmut Kohl's CDU/CSU. But if Soviet diplomacy under Gorbachev continues to display more tactical subtlety than it did when his aged and stubborn predecessors deployed hundreds of SS-20's while denouncing the "arms race," the impact of neoneutralism on West German defense and foreign policy will persist and may grow. Perhaps Social Democrats in power *would* behave differently from what their rhetoric of recent years suggests, but if not, readers of this fine book will have an understanding of the storm that may follow the current, relative calm.

Svetlana in Wonderland

The Faraway Music. By Svetlana Alliluyeva. *Lancer International (New Delhi). 192 pp. 115 rupees.*

Reviewed by
Anita Susan Grossman

In the flurry of publicity surrounding the return of Stalin's daughter Svetlana Alliluyeva to the

Anita Susan Grossman *is a visiting lecturer in English at Berkeley.*

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Soviet Union in October 1984, few commentators noted that months before her departure she had published a third volume of memoirs, a sequel to *Twenty Letters to a Friend* and *Only One Year*. Although one might reasonably expect that the book, appearing at such a time, would explain why Svetlana had decided to go back to Russia after seventeen years in the West, *The Faraway Music* instead offers insights that are more indirect and general, if just as curious, into the mind of the world's best-known Soviet defector.

Why, indeed, did she choose to publish this latest installment of her autobiography in India rather than England or the U.S.? In an interview with the Indian journalist Dhiren Bhagat, she said that it was because British and American publishers were not content with the manuscript and wanted her to rewrite it, focusing on her past experiences in the Kremlin rather than on her life in the West. This explanation, like so much of what she has written, seems disingenuous, particularly as it was given only a week before her sudden departure. While it may be true that publishers would have wanted her to revise the somewhat sketchy manuscript, they probably would have requested more discussion of her later experiences in the United States, about which she is remarkably evasive. Instead, her book conveys the sense of a woman appallingly unaware of her own motivation as she restlessly crisscrossed the country with her young daughter in tow, uprooting each home she managed to make for herself in the U.S. (and later in England).

Frequently this strong-willed, capricious woman portrays herself as a helpless victim of circumstances. At one point she notes ruefully, "Although I would have much preferred to live in California, by strange coincidence of fate I could never stay exactly where I wanted." And, later on: "I have become a divorced wife and a single mother once again—something totally unforeseen, but obviously programmed for me in my stars." If, as she complained to the British journalist Miriam Gross last year, she was fated to have "bad experiences everywhere—it is my lot," the statement is true in a deeper sense than she realizes.

Nowhere in *The Faraway Music* is there any indication of the violent temper that led Svetlana to quarrel with many of her American friends, and with such British ones as Malcolm Muggeridge, with whom she filmed a BBC program in 1981. Instead she portrays herself as the mildest-mannered of women who finds even the pledge of allegiance required of all new U.S. citizens too violent because in it they promise "to bear arms to protect the Republic." A pacifist who sees the U.S. as ominously similar in national character to the Soviet Union, she describes both alike in her book as superpowers "whose enlarged, overgrown bodies are governed by very small brains at the top, by the fearful minds of paranoiacs"—in contrast to the "moderation" and "rationalism of Europeans and Asians, even of neutrals with their patience and tolerance, for *answers*" (her emphasis).

IN HER personal life, unnamed Princeton friends drop out of sight for no reason that she can discern, and when she notices that her growing daughter is seldom invited to other girls' homes, she can only attribute it to cold-war hostilities (this, in the days of détente). Moreover, those friends whom in *Only One Year* she had described with affection are now viewed with a more critical eye, if not outright hostility. This is especially true of her lawyers. In 1969 she was all gratitude to them, noting in her book that "I was venturing on a voyage in a ship with a good, friendly crew—was it necessary to think about what the crew was doing? I could only thank them for having taken me on board." Now

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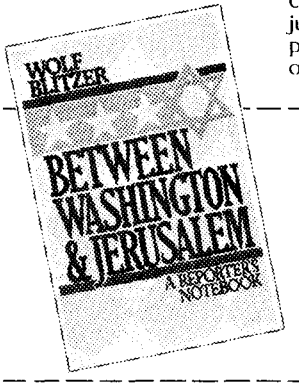

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she makes a complete turnaround, claiming that they "used, deceived, and tricked" her.

Svetlana's latest account of her relations with her lawyers reveals her own naiveté as much as others' opportunism. When she appeared at the American embassy in New Delhi on March 6, 1967 requesting asylum, she handed over to State Department officials the manuscript of the book which was to become *Twenty Letters to a Friend*. Without her knowledge or consent it was copied and circulated among State Department employees, one of whom sent a copy to the law firm of Greenbaum, Wolff, and Ernst. Soon afterward, the elderly head of the firm, Eddie ("the General") Greenbaum, flew to Switzerland to meet Svetlana and arranged an unusual agreement in which for the sum of $1.5 million she signed all her rights over to Copex, the firm's corporation based in Liechtenstein. Although several publishers had already written to Svetlana in Switzerland proposing offers, she claims that the Swiss Foreign Office, supposedly at the behest of the American government, kept them from meeting her until after she had signed the agreement.

Svetlana further maintains that she was not fully informed at the time of the nature of her agreement with Copex and Patientia (another Liechenstein-based corporation for the lawyers). She was shown an attaché case filled with banknotes, and when she asked whether it represented a publisher's advance, a Swiss lawyer laughingly replied, "Well, you may regard it as advance money, yes." Then the case was whisked away, never to be seen again. Instead, she drew checks on an account in the name of the law firm, and later received an allowance from a personal trust fund. All publicity was in the hands of the lawyers, as were the serialization rights, another source of distress. When *Life* published excerpts from her book, it included family photographs some of which had been obtained from unknown sources, while others had been taken from the desk of Svetlana's Moscow apartment; in either case, many of the attributions were erroneous.

More seriously, Svetlana's lawyers exploited her ignorance of translators by advising her to give the job to a novice, Priscilla MacMillan Johnson, whose chief qualification seems to have been her connection with the law firm, rather than to the distinguished translator Max Hayward, who had requested the assignment. No names were mentioned; she was merely told that the two candidates included "a girl about your age, a nice person in whose house you could stay upon arrival in the U.S." and "an Englishman who wants very much to come to the U.S. to translate your book." As it turned out, although she spent several weeks with the Johnson family on Long Island, she was not consulted about the translation, which she found embarrassingly bad.

As for immigration procedures, also handled by the law firm, Svetlana claims that she was not informed that she had been admitted to the United States on a six-month tourist visa rather than as a resident alien (a status she did not receive for a full year later). At the same time, the story given to the press by her lawyers was that she merely wanted to travel in the West in order to publish her memoirs. (The Soviet government, embarrassed by her flight on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the Revolution, was putting pressure on Washington to play down her defection.) Indeed, from the very first, the State Department had been exceedingly nervous about her defection, not knowing what to do with her. Not only did Svetlana have to spend six weeks in Switzerland before the U.S. finally decided to admit her, but we learn here that she had to hide out illegally in Rome for three days before being allowed to fly into Switzerland.

THE note of comedy implicit in the account of Svetlana's surreptitious flight to Switzerland (complete with disguise of raincoat and sunglasses) broadens into farce with the story of her ill-fated union with Wesley Peters some three years later. By 1970 the celebrated author of *Twenty Letters to a Friend* and *Only One Year* was receiving persistent letters of invitation from the widow of Frank Lloyd Wright to visit Taliesin West, the architectural commune run by the Wright Foundation near Scottsdale, Arizona. Olga Milianov Wright, a Georgian by birth who had lost a daughter named Svetlana in an auto accident some twenty-five years before, sensed a mystic affinity with the younger woman, while Svetlana on her part seems to have felt that she had found a replacement for the mother she had lost in early childhood. Mrs. Wright actively encouraged the courtship of Svetlana and her former son-in-law, Wesley Peters, the chief architect for the firm. As for Svetlana, she was dazzled by the whirlwind courtship conducted by Peters (whom she married within three weeks of coming to Taliesin) and by the community itself.

To be sure, there were warning signs. A few days before the wedding Mrs. Wright advised Svetlana that her fiancé was a compulsive spender addicted to gift-giving, and was heavily in debt. Soon Svetlana also began to notice deficiencies in the set-up at Taliesin. Since there were no private accommodations for residents, Svetlana had to take all her meals, along with mid-morning and afternoon tea, in the public dining hall. Inevitably she came into conflict with Mrs. Wright, who saw herself as the spiritual as well as the administrative head of the community.

A devotee of Eastern mysticism and a disciple of Gurdjieff, Mrs. Wright "communicated" with her dead husband and daughter and preached Sunday-morning sermons to a crowd assembled in her living room. While Mrs. Wright could announce to her associates that Taliesin "is set against all conventionalities. We are Truth Against the World," Svetlana saw it more as a primitive version of the society she had taken so much trouble to leave. No doubt she also found it irksome that her husband had never had a vacation in his nearly forty years of service, but was constantly on call like the busiest obstetrician, to be paged in restaurants and telephoned at midnight by clients.

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Not surprisingly, the honeymoon at Taliesin was quickly over. It is not clear from Svetlana's account whether Mrs. Wright's friendship cooled as soon as she learned that Svetlana was not going to donate $30,000 annually to the Foundation, as requested; or whether it was because Svetlana had broken with tradition there by conceiving a child, and thus forcing some semblance of individual family life for herself and her husband. As it turned out, the husband found his needs admirably served by the communal set-up and felt no obligation to change it so late in life for a new wife and child. The wonder is not that the marriage lasted as long as it did, but that two middle-aged people of such differing tastes and temperaments should have been so deluded as to have married at all.

BOTH the episode of her brief marriage and the publication of her first book illustrate Svetlana's impulsiveness and her ability, once decided on a course of action, to close her eyes to unpleasant facts. With regard to the lawyers, it seems doubtful that they lied outright about her immigration status, and whatever huge profits they made on the worldwide distribution of *Twenty Letters to a Friend,* they did not exactly leave her impoverished: the $1.5 million she received in 1967 would be worth somewhere between $3 and $5 million in today's money. From her own account, she signed her agreement with the lawyers in Switzerland in an agony of impatience, and when advised by friends to wait before publishing her book in Europe, she told them she wanted no delay. In both love and business it would seem from her account that an initial ill-considered enthusiasm was followed by an equally intemperate swing in the other direction.

In her book Svetlana is similarly unable to resolve the contradictions of her status in the West. She deplores the vulgar publicity with which her defection was received, and particularly the television appearances insisted on by her lawyers to promote *Twenty Letters to a Friend.* Yet, against the wishes of her lawyers, she volunteered to read the most anti-Soviet chapters of her second book, *Only One Year,* over the Voice of America, thereby provoking the Soviet government to retaliate by stripping her of her citizenship. Again and again in her books Svetlana writes of her wish for a quiet, simple life in the West, but the suburban obscurity in which she lived over the past dozen years as a single mother suited her even less.

She complains that in America she missed "those sophisticated intellectuals and artists I used to know in Moscow and Leningrad: there they were able to understand me and to separate me from my father. Oh, how I longed here too to be amidst such fine minds—but I had no access to them." Why such fine minds should be expected to seek out her company she does not explain. The influential and powerful friends described in *Only One Year* are no longer in evidence, for the most part—perhaps because, as she claimed in an interview, she did not want to become a mere "pet" of Russian experts. She did not attempt to teach Russian at a university, or pursue any other kind of regular employment. Nor did she seem to have much interest in the artistic or literary scene in the U.S.

IF AUTOBIOGRAPHY is a kind of self-discovery, *The Faraway Music* is the least successful work of Svetlana's trilogy, displaying as it does an astonishing lack of self-awareness. Although the book is not exactly anti-American (and is still quite hostile to the Soviet regime), it was written at a time when she was far from happy with her life in the West, and probably speculating on the possibility of returning to the son and daughter she had left behind in the Soviet Union. Whatever autobiographical impulses were prompting her were partially blocked, if not utterly sabotaged, by Svetlana's uncertainty about her present and future life. She may have begun the book as a kind of therapy, but seems to have finished it in haste out of impatience with a project that had grown too problematic.

Her motives aside, *The Faraway*

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Music remains a curious footnote to a life which is itself a historical oddity. Were she not the only daughter of one of the most bloodthirsty tyrants of all time, Svetlana would have been just another neurotic, middle-aged émigrée unable to put down roots in new soil. Instead, because of her uniquely privileged position, she was able to come full circle, returning to the land of her birth with her Soviet citizenship restored. No doubt she has found new sources of unhappiness in Tbilisi, where she now lives with her teen-aged American daughter. As for her autobiography, the next and by far the most fascinating installment will remain unpublished in India—and everywhere else.

Preacher's Progress

ORAL ROBERTS: AN AMERICAN LIFE. By DAVID EDWIN HARRELL, JR. *Indiana University Press. 622 pp. $16.95.*

Reviewed by TERRY TEACHOUT

"I WAS trying to play golf with Oral Roberts the other day," Bob Hope once cracked, "but the holes kept healing up." Quite a bit of revealing social data is embedded in that homely one-liner. It says a lot about Oral Roberts that most people, remembering his notorious early days as a television preacher, get the joke without benefit of lengthy explanation; it says almost as much that Bob Hope found it an appropriate joke to tell on television twenty years later. But the really interesting aspect of the joke is the fact that the first part of it is true: Bob Hope and Oral Roberts *do* play golf together.

What makes this so interesting is the social background of Oral Roberts. Born in abject depression-era poverty, Roberts grew up to become the leading figure of a comparatively obscure religious sect given to such arcane practices as faith healing and speaking in tongues. His clientele consisted in large part of the single most socially disenfranchised segment of the American public: the rural poor. But in the course of his long career Roberts has traveled from these miserable beginnings to something very much like middle-class respectability. He built a surprisingly good university in Oklahoma, joined the Methodist church, and achieved a substantial measure of acceptance among conservative Protestants. He has also become the sort of person about whom comedians like Bob Hope tell good-natured jokes, an equally formidable achievement in its way.

This unlikely success story has now found a scholarly teller: David Edwin Harrell, Jr., chairman of the history department at the University of Atlanta. As a biographer, Harrell shares many of the characteristic infirmities of his profession. He is long-winded: *Oral Roberts: An American Life* runs to over six hundred pages of very small print. Moreover, though he never descends to anything like out-and-out hagiography, Harrell clearly suffers from an acute case of clientitis. And his prose style is so pedestrian at times as to make one quail at the decline of upper-level literacy in the American academy. ("But Oral's gift and curse—that probing, innovative, creative, restless spirit which attracts the masses and makes queasy less-talented men—boiled precariously near the surface.")

All this having been said, it is necessary to add that Harrell has still managed to give us a surprisingly worthwhile book. The story he has to tell is so compelling and well-documented that his literary offenses generally assume secondary importance. And while Oral Roberts may not quite be, as Harrell claims, "one of the most influential religious leaders in the world in the 20th century," he is almost certainly the best-known Pentecostalist around—give or take Pat Robertson—which makes *Oral Roberts: An American Life* essential reading for anyone trying to come to grips with the growing influence of conservative Protestantism in American life today.

WHEN H.L. Mencken went to Tennessee to cover the Scopes trial in 1925, he took an evening off to visit a local prayer meeting, an experience which he subsequently wrote up for the Baltimore *Sun*:

> The leader kneeled facing us, his head alternately thrown back dramatically or buried in his hands. Words spouted from his lips like bullets from a machine-gun—appeals to God to pull the penitent back out of Hell, defiances of the demons of the air, a vast impassioned jargon of apocalyptic texts. Suddenly he rose to his feet, threw back his head and began to speak in the tongues —blub-blub-blub, gurgle-gurgle-gurgle. His voice rose to a higher register. The climax was a shrill, inarticulate squawk, like that of a man throttled.

The sensational events recounted here clearly fall under the heading of "Pentecostal practices." The Pentecostal movement is a modern branch of conservative Protestantism which emphasizes faith healing and speaking in tongues, practices associated with the early days of the Christian church and described in the New Testament. Outside of these controversial practices, Pentecostalists have much in common with Protestant fundamentalists.*

The appeal of Pentecostalism was long restricted to rural and lower-class Southerners. "One of the attractions of such groups," Harrell observes of the Pentecostalists, "is that they provide an avenue for advancement and professional status outside traditional institutional channels." This was the career track taken by the young Oral Roberts, born in a log cabin in Oklahoma in 1918 to itinerant Pentecostal evangelists who made a meager living from passing the plate at back-country revival meetings. Roberts never forgot the humiliation of being poor and Pentecostal.

After being "healed" of "tuber-

TERRY TEACHOUT *is an assistant editor of* Harper's *and a regular contributor to* National Review, *the* American Spectator, *and* High Fidelity.

* The doctrinal specifics of fundamentalism are discussed in Richard John Neuhaus's "What the Fundamentalists Want" (COMMENTARY, May 1985).

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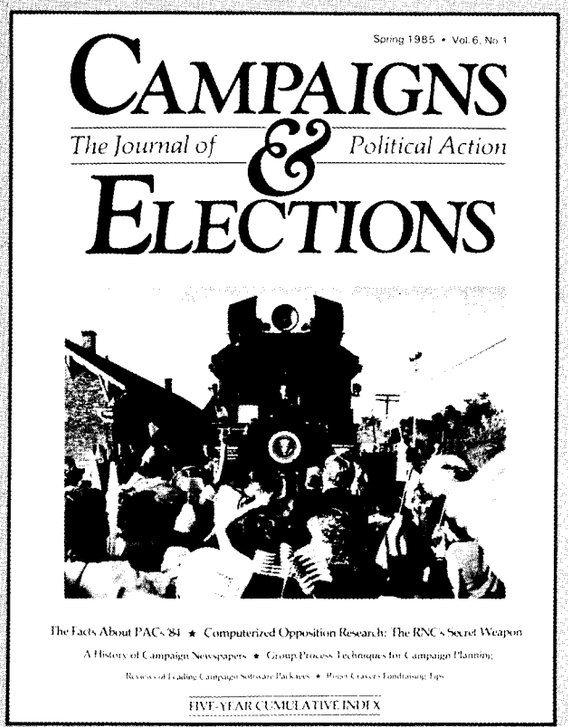
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culosis in both lungs and in the final stages" at a Pentecostal tent meeting in 1935, Roberts dropped out of high school and spent the next twelve years as a minister of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, conducting revivals throughout the South and becoming widely known in Pentecostal circles as an exceptionally accomplished preacher. But Roberts became increasingly dissatisfied with what he described as the "lethargy" and "complacency" of the Pentecostal establishment, as well as with his own continuing near-poverty.

A SERIES of unexpected events in the mid-40's drastically changed the course of Oral Roberts's life. In 1945, he began experimenting for the first time with faith healing. He discovered a biblical text ("I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth") which convinced him that a lower-class living was not the necessary lot of the good Christian. Finally, in 1947, came the moment of revelation:

> Suddenly, Oral recalled, he once again heard an "audible voice" speaking like a "military commander, words of crisp command, clear and strong." "Stand upon your feet," the voice said. "Go and get in your car." Oral obediently walked to his car. "Then God said, 'Drive one block and turn right,'" starting him back toward his parsonage. As he drove toward his home, the message was completed: "From this hour your ministry of healing will begin. You will have my power to pray for the sick and to cast out devils."

Roberts subsequently began to hold Pentecostal tent revivals throughout America. "His audiences were the poor," says Harrell, "and those who, by hard work and moral habits, were one generation removed from society's bottom rung." Though these revivals were conducted in a manner almost austere by prevailing Pentecostal standards, it was the "healing touch" of Roberts that pulled in the crowds. ("As soon as the crippled were touched," one sympathetic witness reported after a 1948 meeting, "they threw their crutches away, deaf ears snapped open, people leaped off stretchers. Next morning crutches were lying all around the tent where they had been left.") Roberts soon developed a huge direct-mail ministry and began producing a thirty-minute television program, filmed at his tent meetings, which by the end of 1957 was seen on 135 television stations around the country. His widely publicized (and criticized) activities made him the best-known evangelist in the United States after Billy Graham.

IN 1961 Roberts announced his plans to build a college in Tulsa, Oklahoma for those Pentecostal youth who were being "lost to the Full Gospel movement by virtue of going to these other universities where God was not supreme." The result was Oral Roberts University, dedicated in 1967 with a speech by Billy Graham, then the touchstone of respectable evangelical Christianity. The Oral Roberts University "life-style" includes a compulsory aerobics progam and mandatory attendance at chapel and Sunday-morning services. All male students wear ties to class. Bizarre as it may sound, the formula seems to have worked. By the end of the 1983-84 academic year the university had an enrollment of 4,507; most of its students come from middle-class families and have finished in the top two-thirds of their high-school graduating classes.

As Roberts turned his energies to the building of Oral Roberts University, his assimilation into the mainstream of Protestant life became more and more complete. He converted to Methodism and in 1968 terminated his long series of tent revivals. He abandoned his old television program for a series of slickly produced prime-time specials that made use of popular music and celebrity guests. Roberts's timing was good: his move toward the Christian mainstream coincided with the rise of the American charismatic movement during the 60's and 70's. In 1977 Roberts embarked on the construction of the City of Faith, a Tulsa health-care complex which contained a sixty-story clinic and diagnostic center, a thirty-story hospital, and a twenty-story medical research center. ("You know," he told an associate, "they just don't believe that God told me sixty, thirty, twenty.") President Reagan sent a letter of congratulations to be read at the dedication ceremonies in 1981. Oral Roberts had finally arrived.

"ONLY in America," Oral Roberts has remarked on numerous occasions, "could a little stuttering boy, born in the Indian territory of Pontotoc County, Oklahoma, the son of a poor preacher, . . . amount to anything, could start a school from scratch and build a university." Roberts's comments remind us that the entire thrust of his career has been toward the forms and trappings of social respectability—exactly as has been the case with every other conservative Protestant religious leader from Billy Graham to Jerry Falwell. Indeed, what is most surprising about Oral Roberts's gaudy career is its sheer benignity: no anti-Semitism, no racism, no political agendas, no serious claims of venality or personal dishonesty, a truly remarkable degree of doctrinal tolerance. While there may be much to be offended by in the activities of Oral Roberts, there is nothing whatsoever to fear.

To view Roberts's ministry in perspective is to see its manifest relationship to the activities of England's Victorian reformers and of the American reformers who accompanied the Second Great Awakening of the 19th century. Both groups exerted a moral and civilizing influence on their followers that helped prevent the development of a lumpenproletariat and helped move England and America in the direction of a middle-class society. It was with the gradual demise of these reform movements, as James Q. Wilson and Richard J. Herrnstein have recently reminded us in *Crime and Human Nature*, that there occurred the equally gradual development of a true American underclass. For all its intellectual naiveté, the Pentecostal movement (as Harrell rightly observes) clearly played a similar role

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as a response to the conditions of rural Southern life.

It is understandably hard for educated Americans to find any enduring merit in the activities of a television preacher who speaks in tongues and claims with numbing regularity to receive messages directly from God. But there seems little question of Oral Roberts's sincerity. "His faults," Harrell asserts, "if faults they be, are rooted not in chicanery but in calling. . . . [H]e is motivated not by greed but by God, as he hears Him." And religions like Pentecostalism, as alien as they must inevitably seem to sophisticated onlookers, surely offer a superior alternative to the squalor and demoralization of America's underclass.

Oral Roberts: An American Life suggests an obvious corollary to Samuel Johnson's remark that no occupation is as innocent as that of making money. In a society like ours, perhaps no occupation is as harmless, or as potentially civilizing, as the preaching of an essentially moralistic and individualistic religion—even with a little faith healing thrown in on the side.

Holding the Center

CUTTING EDGES: MAKING SENSE OF THE EIGHTIES. By CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER. *Random House. 221 pp. $17.95.*

Reviewed by LARRY D. NACHMAN

Cutting Edges is an anthology of Charles Krauthammer's recent columns written, by and large, for the *New Republic* in which he appears regularly. Given the space limitations of this genre, these small essays are remarkable for their fine prose and the complexity and subtlety of their arguments.

The viewpoint of these essays is, as to be expected, very much that of Martin Peretz's *New Republic*. To say that is in no way to call into question Krauthammer's independence and originality. The tradition of a political journal, from the days of the *London*, the *Edinburgh*, and the *Westminster Reviews*, has been to represent a common political perspective. It is one of the reasons one turns to a particular journal, to see arguments reflecting and elaborating a definite stance toward contemporary political issues.

Although Krauthammer's book covers a wide range of political issues, it leans more toward foreign than to domestic policy. Krauthammer argues for a strong military establishment, including a nuclear arsenal that could withstand annihilation by a Soviet first strike, and for an aggressive foreign policy, including American aid to anti-Communist rebels in Africa and Central America. These views are consistent with the editorial policy of the *New Republic* which has refused to incorporate into its liberalism a contempt for the foreign-policy principles that were associated with the liberal wing of the Democratic party until the Vietnam war.

LIKE most of his *New Republic* colleagues, Krauthammer regards himself as a Jackson Democrat—Henry, not Jesse—and laments the passing of influence of that wing of the party. Krauthammer's essay, "Whatever Became of the American Center?" is a profession of liberal faith which serves as a keystone of the book, holding together the divided positions which make up Krauthammer's politics.

Krauthammer uses a device drawn from the Preamble to the Constitution to summarize his politics. Speaking clearly of himself as well as of Henry Jackson, he writes: "He believed . . . that the purpose of the Union was to provide for both the common defense and the general welfare."

Now, Krauthammer believes, no one speaks for both these responsibilities of government. "Today the two parties have neatly divided up those responsibilities between them, Republicans committed to defense ('strength'), Democrats to welfare ('fairness')."

What Krauthammer wishes for, then, is a political constellation that would repair "the fractured moieties of our existence." He awaits the return of the Democratic Center: at the moment, he appears to favor the domestic policies of the Democrats and the foreign policies of the Republicans. His sense of loss is conveyed by the opening lines of his essay:

> The death of Senator Henry Jackson has left an empty stillness at the center of American politics. Jackson was the symbol, and the last great leader, of a political tradition that began with Woodrow Wilson and reached its apogee with John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and Hubert Humphrey.

It is perfectly reasonable to prefer the domestic policies of one party and the foreign policies of the other party. It is understandable that one would regret the circumstances that produced a condition in which neither party's political program agreed with one's political views on the vital issues of the day. What does cause one to wonder in Krauthammer's case is that the positions he takes on domestic issues appear to be as far from those of the Democratic party as they are from the Republican.

In this volume of essays, he attacks comparable worth, which is now becoming, along with affirmative action, the fundamental social policy of liberal Democrats. He opposes the power within the Democratic party of radical black and feminist leaders. He displays a political and economic preference for a free market as long as it is a policy of government to protect those who suffer economically as a result of the operations of the market (a "safety net"?).

Because there is so little in this volume on the domestic issues which divide the two parties, it is hard to see Krauthammer's position clearly. But on the basis of what is here, one would have to ask whether, in fact, he approves of the social policies of the Democratic party.

Krauthammer asks, "Whatever happened to the American Center?" His answer is, "It died and left no heirs." I have a somewhat

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different version of the demise of what Krauthammer calls the Center. I may be mistaken, but I think that I saw it being killed in the summer of 1972. It was driven from the Democratic party by a series of reforms that replaced the old-line party organizations, usually urban and liberal, with transient majorities whose choices would not reflect the concern of professional party leaders to find candidates appealing to a national majority as well as to a majority within the party. Incapable of surviving without regular doses of power, Krauthammer's Center succumbed by Labor Day. Those who destroyed it now control the destiny of the party of whose domestic policies Krauthammer believes he approves.

Krauthammer is a writer, an intellectual. He is not a politician. An intellectual does not have to, nor may he, take the posture of an apologist for the full range of positions espoused by a political party. The refusal to do so is what separates a political thinker from an ideologue. Someone with Krauthammer's independence of mind is in no danger of becoming a mere ideologue.

In politics as in ethics, however, there is the matter of judgment. One has to choose—not once and for all and forever; we are, after all, speaking of politics not religion —among the real alternatives which present themselves. I should like to send Krauthammer a Milton Himmelfarb questionnaire (see "Another Look at the Jewish Vote" in the December COMMENTARY). He would be asked to list the principal domestic issues of the day and his stance on them. He would then be asked to examine the policies of both major parties and he would be summoned to judge which now come closer to his own list. He would be asked to consider the near future and asked which of the parties is most likely to reflect his own preferences. We already have the results of his foreign-policy questionnaire.

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In furniture that's as functional as it is elegant—in vivid contrast to many luxury hotels that can be conspicuously short on comfort.

And in restaurants acclaimed not only for their haute cuisine, but for their unique Alternative Cuisine menus—designed for those who love fine food, but abhor calories.

All of which makes each Four Seasons extraordinary, not because it tries to imitate the original grand hotels, but because it's identical in the single most important respect.

After all, it was founded upon the same grand idea.

UNITED STATES
Austin (1987)
Boston
Chicago:
Ritz Carlton
Dallas:
Mandalay
Conference Center
Fitness Resort, Spa
Houston:
Centre
Inn on the Park
New York:
The Pierre
Newport Beach
Los Angeles (1987)
Philadelphia
San Francisco:
The Clift
Seattle:
The Olympic
Washington, D.C.

CANADA
Edmonton
Montreal
Ottawa
Toronto:
Yorkville
Inn on the Park
Vancouver

London

For reservations call (800) 268-6282 or your travel agent

Four Seasons Hotels

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